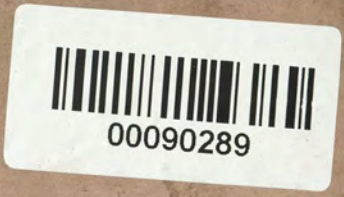
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ATHERTON,

AND

OTHER TALES.

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BY

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

AUTHOR OF "OUR VILLAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO HER DEAR FRIEND,

LADY RUSSELL,

WHOSE SYMPATHY HAS CHEERED THE PAINFULLEST HOUR,

AS HER COMPANIONSHIP HAS GLADDENED THE BRIGHTEST,

THIS TALE,

WRITTEN BENEATH THE SHADOW OF HER OWN BEAUTIFUL SWALLOWFIELD,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE mere plan of Atherton—the bare outline of the story—has lain for many years in my mind as a book to be written some day or other, and it would probably have passed away unexecuted, with other intentions good or bad, had not a proposal to gather together, at the same time, though in a separate form, my dramatic works, and some short prose tales, brought this old scheme to my recollection.

My offer to attempt this, the longest narrative on which I have ventured, was

received with such kind encouragement, that I was easily induced to undertake the task.

This occurred at the end of last summer.

Ten months before, I had had a very severe accident, having been thrown from my little pony carriage, on the hard gravel road of a friend's park. No bones were broken; but the jar had affected every nerve, and falling upon a highly rheumatic subject, had left the limbs and body crippled and powerless. There was, however, something to be expected from the great restorer, Time; and during the summer, I had been lifted down stairs, and driven through our beautiful lanes, in hopes that the blessed air, to which I had been almost as much accustomed as a gipsy, would prove a still more effectual remedy.

But the season was peculiarly unfa-

vourable. I gained no strength. The autumn found me again confined to my room; wheeled with difficulty from the bed to the fireside; unable to rise from my seat, to stand for a moment, to put one foot before another; and when lifted into bed, incapable of turning or moving in the slightest degree whatever. Even in writing, I was often obliged to have the ink-glass held for me, because I could not raise my hand to dip the pen in the ink.

In this state, with frequent paroxysms of pain, was the greater part of "Atherton" written. It was concluded during a severe attack of influenza,—concluded because it lay upon my mind as an engagement to be fulfilled—a debt to be discharged; and there was less risk in the exertion than in the anxiety.

I have told this story, not so much as an

excuse for faults or shortcomings, since I well know that the public looks, and has a right to look, to the quality of a work, and not to the circumstances under which it has been produced; I tell it as a fact rather than an apology; and most surely not as a complaint. So far, indeed, am I from murmuring against that Will which alone knows what is best for us all, that I cannot be sufficiently thankful to the merciful Providence which, shattering the frame, left such poor faculties as were originally vouchsafed to me, undimmed and unclouded; enabling me still to live by the mind, and not only to enjoy the never-wearying delight of reading the thoughts of others, but even to light up a sick chamber, and brighten a wintry sky, by recalling the sweet and sunny valley, which formed one of the most cherished haunts of my happier years.

The shorter Stories might, I think, fairly pass for manuscript. They were written, for the most part, for one of those costly and splendid Annuals, which many bought to look at, and few cared to read. That they were composed to match the pictures is hardly a disadvantage, since pictures are often full of suggestions; but that they were called for in furious haste, and were sometimes illustrations of distant ages and distant countries, was hardly favourable to a writer so slow and so home-loving as myself. I would fain have added one or two of such sketches as used to be received only too indulgently, but strength and power have failed me so entirely, that I have been unable even to correct the proofs of the later volumes.

And now, gentle reader, health and farewell.

M. R. MITFORD.

Swallowfield, March, 1854.

ATHERTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT FARM.

It was about three o'clock on a November afternoon, somewhere about five and thirty years ago, that an old fashioned post-chaise, with one solitary inmate, went rumbling and jumbling over the wide verdant ocean of one of the great downs of the southern counties. The traveller, a lean, gaunt, bony man, a good deal on the shady side of fifty, bore about him in his acute features, his shrewd eye, a certain

formality of demeanour and an occasional quaintness of phrase, evident marks of his profession; and did not need the blue bag which, flanked by an ancient folio, rested on the seat beside him, to be at once recognized for what he really was, a London solicitor. There was, however, in the deep and somewhat sad abstraction in which he leant back in the carriage, evidence of more personal feelings than those arising from professional interest; and he started, as from a painful dream, when, on arriving at the top of a hill, or rather on attaining the extremity of a high tableland, the postboy suddenly stopped his horses, and touching his cap, turned round with the inquiry:

"To the Hall, sir?"

"No; to the Great Farm."

And, aroused from the dismal thoughts by which he had been engrossed, Mr. Langhton addressed himself to the contem-

plation of the beautiful landscape before him.

A most beautiful landscape it was. The season had been mild, so that the trees retained much of their foliage, and had rather gained than lost in richness of colour; the dark and uniform verdure of summer being well exchanged for the warm hues of autumn, varying from golden brown to palish yellow, with many a ruddy gleam from the old thorns, and many an orange light from the beech-woods, forming so fine a contrast with the emerald depths of the grassy valley, and the purplish tint of the hills. A thrice beautiful landscape. One of those oases of cultivation which are occasionally found amid the great downs of the south of England, and appear all the richer and more fertile when embedded in the surrounding barrenness and sterility.

The road wound down a long declivity

to a village embosomed in wood, with its grey church-tower, its pretty rectory, its neat cottages and cottage-shops to the old gables, the barns, stables, ricks, and innumerable outbuildings of the Great Farm. Climbing up the opposite hill appeared the magnificent demesne of Atherton Hall; the park paling overhung with gigantic trees, bounding the road for upwards of a mile, its stately lodges, its waters, lawns, and woods, extending to a chase whose wild forest scenery was lost in the distance. Midway the acclivity, the princely mansion, a fine specimen of the Palladian architecture which prevailed in England in the eighteenth century, with its noble portico and long colonnades, its broad terraces, and flight above flight of marble steps, stood glittering in the wintry light, as if, like the peacocks sunning themselves on the balustrade, the very walls had a consciousness of their own proud beauty.

Mr. Langhton had the familiarity of a native with the scenery, and, himself a man of refined taste, never looked at it without pleasure. Now, however, as he gazed at the palace of the proud noble and the homestead of the tenant, his musings seemed to become sadder:

"A strange destiny," thought he, "to carry wealth to one household and poverty to another; misery, perhaps to both! Well, it is a lawyer's fate!".

And so thinking he drove up to the door.

There were few houses which wore more completely the outward show of comfort and prosperity than the Great Farm at Atherton. It was a large square substantial building, with fine fruit-trees covering the upper part of the walls, and jessamine, honeysuckle, and China roses clustering round the windows. The green court, which divided the house from the road, was gay during nine months of the year

with flowers and flowering trees; and boasted still some lingering spikes of hollyhock, a stray blossom of clove and scarlet geranium, and bunches of that most fragrant of roses which is called "of the four seasons." The mignionette too and the violet still mingled their delicious odours. People who sincerely love flowers contrive to make them blow sooner and later than others. We see this in the poorest cottages, and here was no poverty to contend with. On one side of the court was that most affluent of all territories, an immense orchard, a perfect grove of fruit-trees, cherry, apple, pear, plum, and walnut at their tallest growth and fullest bearing. Behind was a large kitchen-garden; and on the side opposite to the orchard a magnificent farm-yard; a huge and indescribable mixture of riches and mud. Behind that came poultry-yard and rick-yard, horse-pond and duck-

pond, barns, stables, cart-houses, cow-houses, dovecots, and pigsties, with all their inhabitants biped and quadruped, feathered and unfeathered of every denomination.

They who talk of the quiet of the country can hardly have been in a great farm-yard, towards sunset on a wintry day, when the teams are come back from the plough and the cattle from the field, and the whole population is gathered together for the purpose of feeding. I would match it for noise and dirt and jostling against Cheapside, and taking into account the variety of the creatures, and the different keys combined in that wild chorus, I should have little doubt of winning.

Lord Delancy, the noble owner of the Hall, had most extensive estates in the same county; but nearly all the parish of Atherton was rented by the tenant of

the Great Farm, and that tenant was a woman.

Mrs. Warner had presided over this land of plenty for nearly fifty years, originally as the wife of the master, latterly as the mistress, and always with high reputation for hospitality and good management. She was a neat, gentle, lady-like person, with silver hair, a fair, pale complexion, mild dark eyes, a little tremor of head and voice, and a slight bend of the slender figure; altogether a most venerable and beautiful old woman. Her family consisted of a daughter-in-law, the widow of her only son, and of their daughter Catherine, commonly called Katy Warner, a girl of fifteen.

Katy's mother was a round, rosy, merry, bustling dame, who having, since the death of her first husband, had, as she expressed it, the luck to marry and bury a second, bore the name of Bell. To her

for some years back the chief government of the house and farm had devolved, and few women could be fitter for such a charge. With a frame strong and active as that of a man, a competent knowledge of husbandry, a good judgment in cattle, and considerable skill in parish affairs; with a kindness that was always felt and a tongue that was often heard, she scolded her way through the agricultural year from wheat-sowing to harvest. Ignorant as a new-born child of the world and its ways, except always the small bit of that "huge rotundity" called the manor and royalty of Atherton, it is probable that the very limitation of her faculties conduced not a little to her prosperity. Fearful of experiments, she stuck to the old routine adapted to her capacity; and trusted to the experience of her labourers, men for the most part born upon the land, who knew every inch of

the ground, and cared for the interest of their good mistress as if it had been their own. Everything throve in this female household, from the flocks whose numbers were counted by thousands down to Katy's bees.

The parlour, the common living-room of the family, was smaller than, to judge from its appearance, any room in that house ought to have been, chosen, perhaps, on that account—people who can command large rooms having a frequent tendency to use small ones.

It was a sort of excresence on one side of the dwelling, a kind of afterthought, with a sunny bay-window commanding the farm-yard, from which it was only parted by a low paling and a slip of turf, and giving a peep at the high-road.

A snug and cheerful apartment, after all, was that little parlour, crowded with furniture, from the good old lady's high-

backed chair to the low stool on which Katy, whenever that mercurial little person did stay five minutes in a place, used to sit at her grandmother's feet.

In the centre was a small Pembroke table of dark mahogany, somewhat rickety; at the end a sideboard of the same material, the drawers groaning with stands of spirits, and bottles of home-made wine, the top covered with miscellaneous articles, Mrs. Warner's large Bible, surmounted by a cookery-book, occupying one corner, whilst Mrs. Bell's enormous work-baskets and work-bags over-filled the other; a beautiful jar of dried grasses, Katy's property, occupied the middle. Katy's possessions, indeed, might be traced everywhere. Her litter, living and dead, cumbered the walls and the floor. Birds, kittens, skipping-ropes, bridles, riding-whips, and battle-dores were distributed all over the room, whilst

a fat spaniel called Flora lay basking before the fire.

Two triangular cupboards occupied two opposite corners; of which one was so crammed with closely-packed glass and china that it was dangerous for any unaccustomed finger to attempt to extricate cup or saucer from the pile; whilst the other was filled to bursting with articles of daily call, tea, sugar, lemons, nutmegs, and gingerbread. Fruit at all seasons, and cakes of many denominations completed the array. No one could enter that room without tasting the light seed-cake —diet-bread Mrs. Warner called it— compounded from a family recipe a hundred years old; or the green gooseberry wine, famous as that of Mrs. Primrose, sparkling and effervescent as champagne. It was the very temple of hospitality.

A side-door opened into a hall which

might, perhaps, lay equal claim to that title; a large flagged apartment, with a wide open hearth and a heavy oak table, on which business of eating and drinking was going forward all day long. The materials, it is true, were somewhat different; consisting not of such kickshaws as cake and wine, but of solid beef in its most ponderous form of round and surloin, massive bacon, and mighty ale. All the comers and goers of the Farm paid a visit to the Stone Hall; and it may be suspected that they occasionally made an errand for no better purpose.

At this very moment it was the scene of a barter betwixt Joseph Stokes, the old bailiff and factotum, and a west country dealer, bent to exchange a certain drove of horned cattle against a flock of Mrs. Warner's Southdowns. It was probable that the day would go against the good bailiff.

The man of beeves, a seasoned vessel, having declined the home-brewed, and preferred to drive his bargain over a pitcher of gin-toddy, which was already making innovation upon Joseph's brain unused to such potations.

His mistresses the whilst were assembled in the common room; Katy, absorbed by the witcheries of the "Arabian Nights," a recent acquisition; Mrs. Warner nodding over her knitting, and striving, not very successfully, to resist the after-dinner nap of calm and gentle age; Mrs. Bell engaged, with her female prime minister Rachel, in looking over a stupendous flasket of clothes, the produce of the great wash,—such a flasket as might comfortably have carried the fat knight, Sir John, to his immortal ducking in Datchet Mead. Nothing but long habit could have protected Mrs. Warner's slumbers against

the emphatic exclamations of the mistress at stockings mismatched, snagged table-cloths, and missing kerchiefs, or the shrill defences of the maid.

Through the Stone Hall, scarcely noticed by its trafficking tenants, higglers upon a large scale, and into the smaller apartment, hardly less noisy with its vociferous house-wifery, good Mr. Langhton made his way, welcomed as an honoured friend by all its inmates. Even Flora rose lazily from the hearth-rug to greet the guest who carried so kind a heart under so formal a bearing. Dogs are great penetrators into the hidden mystery of character. When they wag their tails, you may be sure either that there is no deception, or that the deception is of the rarest and honestest sort, that the wood beneath is of finer grain than the outward veneering. Flora set up her long ears, and wagged her tail in his honour; Mrs. Warner pressed his offered hand;

Katy skipped about him for joy; Mrs. Bell, jingling her keys, assailed him with a perfect storm of hospitality; and Rachel stood eagerly waiting to execute her orders.

He put aside her offers with characteristic decision. "He would have nothing yet, he thanked her. He had taken something at the last stage. No dinner; no wine; no cakes; no fruit. He must sleep at the Hall, where Lord Delancy had appointed to meet him. He would take a cup of tea by-and-bye, when they did, at their usual time. In the meanwhile, he wished to speak a few words to Mrs. Warner."

So the produce of the great wash was again packed into its huge receptacle, which Mrs. Bell and Rachel shoved with some difficulty through the door; Katy picking up odds and ends of clean linen as they fell from the pile, rolling them into

tight pellets, and tossing them laughingly into the basket as the party disappeared, pretty much as a schoolboy might have flung a ball at cricket.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISER'S WILL.

"KATY grows a charming girl," cried the old lawyer, when left alone with his hostess, settling himself comfortably on the opposite side of the bright wood fire. "She is already taller than her mother, and prettier than anything that I have seen this many a day. That rosy, dimpled, sparkling beauty is become very uncommon in London. I suppose she owes her fulness of bloom to your country air and country freedom. There is as perfect evidence of health in those bright hazel eyes, with their long lashes, and that profusion of shining

brown curls, as in the glowing cheeks and ruddy lips, and the white teeth which she shows as often as she smiles, that is, as often as she speaks."

"She is sunburnt just now," said grandmamma, highly pleased, and wishing to hear more praises of her darling.

"Not a bit more sunburnt than she ought to be, as the party lady said of Wilkes's squint," responded the old lawyer; "her beauty is only the richer for it. How old is she?"

"Fifteen last April; a mere child yet, and I am afraid a spoilt child—wild as a colt untamed, but good and kind and innocent and loving, with all her pranks. Was it of Katy that you wished to speak to me, Mr. Langhton?" asked the old lady, recollecting herself.

"Not exactly, although the subject on which I have to speak with you may greatly influence her future life. Did you ever

hear of a relation of your late husband, called Richard Strange? Do you recollect him?"

"Recollect him? truly do I! Neither my husband nor I were so rich in kinsfolk that we could afford to forget one; and this Richard Strange was, I think, the nearest relation my poor Thomas had. He was his cousin once removed, having been the cousin-german of his father. Ay, he was above a dozen years older than Thomas, and must be old now—half-way, I should think, between fourscore and ninety. I should suppose he must be failing too; although, when I last saw him, he was active and hearty—one of those thin and wiry men who keep their strength long."

"You knew him, then?"

"Yes, I have seen him perhaps half a score times since my marriage; the last time was about fourteen years ago, before my poor son's death. I remember he was

much taken with Katy, then a little toddling thing, just beginning to talk, who laughed and played with him as she did with everybody. I have never seen him since, but we commonly hear from him at Christmas. To say the truth, Mr. Langhton, my husband, who was as kind a soul as ever lived, used to keep up the old fashion of sending a basket of country cheer, turkey, and chine, and such like, to two or three far-away kinsfolk in London; and I have continued the custom, the rather that we know most of them to be not the best off in the world. Somebody, indeed, told my daughter that Richard Strange, though he did look like an old beggar, was quite well to do. But she called upon him in London when she went there last year about the late Mr. Bell's affairs, and found him living in a poor way enough. A very poor way by her account, though she never saw him in

his own place, only in a sort of porter's lodge. Does he want any thing that we can do for him, I wonder? Do you know him, Mr. Langhton?"

"I did know him as intimately, perhaps, as he chose to be known by anybody. He is dead. I was his solicitor; I am now his executor; and it is about his will, Mrs. Warner, that I am come to you. I am not afraid of overturning a mind so well-balanced as yours. Did it never occur to you that there are in the world such things as misers? That cousin of your good husband, Richard Strange, has died worth almost two millions of money; and of that sum, nearly half—quite half, except moderate legacies to a few charities, and the still fewer private friends, that a man who passes his life in money-getting can hope to acquire—the half of this sum is bequeathed to the heirs of the body of his deceased kinsman, Thomas Warner of Atherton Great Farm."

"To Katy! the only daughter of his only son!—to my poor Katy!" And in spite of the well-balanced mind which had been justly imputed to her, the good grandmother, struck, perhaps, by a transition in the fate of her simple pet, which sounded like the conclusion of a fairy-tale, seemed likely to faint.

"Ay, dear Mrs. Warner, you may well look astounded. Take a glass of your own wine," said Mr. Langhton, administering the cordial. "You may well be frightened: it is a terrible destiny to be a great heiress. But there is health of mind as well as of body in that bright-eyed damsel. She will have you to take care of her, and, in a far less important degree, she will also have me. And she shall also, if I see cause for such a measure, have the Court of Chancery," added the good lawyer with a peculiar smile, "which, with all its faults, and they are

many, does yet extend a very vigilant protection over its wards, a most comfortable protection to those who have heiresses in charge, keeping off fortune-hunters, and rendering elopements and abductions unprofitable and unsafe. Ay, we must keep off fortune-hunters," continued he, slowly rubbing his hands with an air of deliberation, as if weighing some important project, "we must keep off fortune-hunters. But as Katy will have only too much money of her own, instead of looking out ourselves for mere wealth, we must select for her some young man for whom we can answer; whose estate and position will satisfy the world, and whose character will be a pledge for her happiness. A fortune of nearly a million is certainly, according to my views, a great danger, and therefore a great calamity; but there are consolations even for that. We must look about us."

"Or Katy hereafter may look about for herself," interposed Mrs. Warner. "Old as I am, I have still some faith in a marriage of affection. With that fortune, and the prettiness you were talking of, our little girl may make her own choice."

"Hem!" quoth the man of law again, rubbing his hands. "We may help her, though. Those love-matches of boys and girls are not always the happiest. However, we'll talk of that another time. These are early days as yet; for, as you may well imagine, I took care to inform you as soon as I had ascertained that there was no chance, I may say no possibility of another claimant."

"Poor Richard Strange! When did he die?"

"That there is no telling. He lived, if such an existence can be called living, in miserable dilapidated chambers, in an out-of-the-way place called Lyon's Inn. I

myself had never been inside his rooms until I went thither upon this business. Frequently as he had occasion to consult me, he either came to me at my own office, or appointed to meet me at some third place; always contriving to make the persons with whom he had dealings, whether they bought estates, or whether they sold estates; or whether, as happened most frequently, they mortgaged the dirty acres, defray every charge possible. My bills, always paid by the other party, were nothing compared with his: meetings, journeys, consultations, letters written, letters received, postage, carriage, loss of time, and when every imaginable item had been put down, he would add some unimaginable sum under the head of sundries. A thorough miser was Richard Strange; Elwes might have taken pattern from him."

"And was that how he scraped together so much money?"

"No doubt he began by scraping together—by mere saving. That was before my time. But in addition to his habit of hoarding, which was a veritable instinct like that of a squirrel or a monkey, he had immense sagacity in the management of money—understood the handling of that delicate machine, called the stocks, better than any man on 'Change, never missed a good stroke, never made a bad one, trafficked in everything, gained by everything, lost nothing, spent nothing; so that on the whole, I am rather surprised that he did not cut up richer."

"Mr. Langhton! richer!"

"Aye! such will be the general feeling of the monied world. Everybody will wonder what he could have done with his wealth; though, to be sure, we may find a good deal more yet; for he has left us no list of his property, and we have had little time to rummage. There may be another

million so far as I know. We shall find out by degrees. I must inquire amongst our great capitalists. They may help us."

"He knew them then?"

"Knew them! to see the respect paid to that shabby, dirty old figure when he entered any of the marts where men of money congregate! We are all gold-worshippers in our great Babylon. But in this case they bent before the skill as well as the metal; the amasser as well as the possessor of riches."

"Poor Richard Strange!" sighed Mrs. Warner. "And with all this gold, and this homage because of his gold, he died, if I understand you right, alone?"

"Alone as he had lived. The portress of the inn rendered him the little service that he would permit in his chambers; always under his own eye, for he visited nobody, and received his letters and parcels at the lodge. An honest, simple

creature she was, who, in spite of his avarice and his suspicions, had a certain pity for his age, his loneliness, and his infirmities. The four-score years and five were beginning to tell upon him fast. She always called him the poor gentleman. I am happy to say that he has left her what will make her comfortable, which, of course, we should have taken care to do on Katy's account, if he had not. I mention it only because it is pleasant that he should have done the right thing. There are good points in most of us, and they were not wanting in Richard Strange—though the crust at the surface was hard and deep."

"But his death, Mr. Langhton? Tell me of that?"

"Well, on Monday evening last, as I was sitting dismally enough, alone in Norfolk Street, turning over huge masses of law papers relating to another acquain-

tance of yours, to whom poverty will be a sorer trial than riches to Katy; this good creature, Mrs. Barnes, made her appearance to announce to me that Mr. Strange was missing. She came to me, she said, because he had once ordered her never to speak about him to any one else; the nearest approach to confidence that he had ever evinced towards any human being. He had not been seen or heard of since the preceding Tuesday. Letters and parcels had arrived; clerks had called on foot, and gentlefolk in coaches; they had rung the old bell till the wire broke; they had knocked till they were weary; there was no answer to knock or ring; no paper on the door, no sound of life in the chambers. Once before he had been missing for days, and had come out as if nothing had happened, only pale and thin. Another time, he had been gone a week, when the paper on the door said,

'out till six.' But then he had gone through the lodge; and now she was certain that he had not passed. What should she do?"

"And you broke open the door? It must have been an awful moment!"

And Mrs. Warner laid down her knitting, and held her spectacles in her trembling hand.

"It was an awful moment. I took with me my partner, James Osborne, and two or three other persons well known to poor Strange; called in the parish authorities; and, after a due course of knocking and shouting, proceeded to break open the door. We were obliged to summon locksmiths and blocksmiths. The gates of Newgate were never more strongly barricaded. It was an awful moment, and a most fearful sight. The squalidness, the sordidness, the dirt, the utter destitution of the miser's home. No sign of coals

in the rusty grate; not a vestige of food; not so much as a cup of water; and the poor owner of these riches and this misery, one of the greatest capitalists of Europe, lying in the midst of the papers and parchments which represented his enormous wealth, shrivelled up in a corner, covered with a rug which a beggar would have scorned, dead, as it seemed to me, rather of cold and starvation, than of sickness or of age. It was a terrible lesson."

"May Heaven pardon him!" And good Protestant as she was, it may be suspected that Mrs. Warner's inmost thought was not very unlike a prayer for the soul of Richard Strange. Mr. Langhton's next words brought her back to earth again.

"Almost the first packet that we discovered was addressed to me, and contained the Will. I had given him several

instructions for such a document many years ago, and was not at all surprised to find that Katy came in for nearly half the property."

"You expected this bequest, Mr. Langhton?"

"And you wonder that I did not communicate my expectations to you! I thought such a bequest probable. But who could answer for the caprice of a man so reserved and so little accessible to ordinary motives? He might have endowed a college or a cat. Would it have been wise to have entrusted dear Mrs. Bell with a contingency which her sanguine temper would have converted into a certainty, and have proclaimed to every soul in the parish, from Lord Delancy to Jacob Stokes?"

In spite of the tears which had moistened Mrs. Warner's spectacles, she now lifted her eyes with a smile in them, which

proved how thoroughly she joined in the good solicitor's estimate of her daughter-in-law's discretion. Then, with sudden recollection, she inquired:

"And the other half of the property?"

"Ay, there is the real mystery of this Will. That Richard Strange should bequeath great part of his money to the heir of his nearest kinsman, with whom he had constantly kept up a sort of intercourse, that for him might be called amicable, is natural and proper enough. But the other half—Did you ever hear your husband talk of a person called Betsy Brown, in conjunction with his kinsman?"

"Never," said Mrs. Warner.

"I feared so. There must have been such a person; and the poor heart, that now lies still and cold in the vaults of St. Clement's Church, must once have throbbed with a quickened pulse at the sound of that name. It is a sore puzzle.

Charged, as I said before, with certain legacies to charities, and to a very few individuals, the whole property is left to me in trust, for the heirs of the late Thomas Warner, of Atherton Great Farm, and Betsy Brown, formerly of Weston, her heirs and assigns. Such names, too!—Betsy Brown! There are a thousand Elizabeth Browns. Weston!—There are a hundred Westons. None of the few people who knew my poor client personally, as a man—not as a trafficker in Loans and Consols—none of these, and they are few, can give me the slightest indication as to the person designated. I must advertise: indeed, I have already given orders to that effect, and set the parish clerks to work, ransacking their registers. If there had but been spinster tacked to the end, so that one might have made sure of its being a maiden name! But there is not the slightest clue to the labyrinth. Luckily,"

added the perplexed lawyer, "the uncertainty respecting the other legatee will not interfere with the payment of Katy's moiety. And here she comes.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEIRESS.

"My queen, how would you like to be a great lady?" inquired Mr. Langhton of the unconscious heiress, using the pet name by which he was accustomed to address her.

"Very much," replied Katy; "very much, indeed."

"You are reading the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments,'" continued Mr. Langhton, glancing at the book, which amongst its other wonders had kept the little damsel quiet during the whole afternoon, and

which, too fascinating to be relinquished, she had carried off with her and still held in her hand. "You are reading the 'Arabian Nights.' What would you say to a Good Genius who brought you the Lamp of Aladdin, even though he should put on the form of a gaunt old lawyer?"

"Ah! but there are no such Good Geniuses now!" exclaimed Katy.

"Does she dare to tell me that? Ask your grandmamma."

Mrs. Warner's smile a little puzzled Katy.

"At all events," rejoined she, "there are no such lamps now-a-days as the Lamp of Aladdin. No Wonderful Lamps that can summon slaves and build palaces."

"Do not make too sure of that either," returned her friend. "For my part, I have always observed that money, provided there be but enough of it, can command as many slaves, and build as many palaces, as any old lamp of them all."

And then yielding to the natural curiosity of Katy, and the eager questioning of her mother, Mr. Langhton, for the second time, poured forth his marvellous tale.

Mrs. Bell, intent on hospitable cares, and thoroughly persuaded that her guest had had no dinner, had entered the room at the very moment of this little dialogue, heading a procession of serving-maidens bearing every sort of refreshment, sweet and savoury, that could be forced into the service of the tea-table, and was just arranging her stores of home-made dainties—hot-buttered cake, ham, sausages, kidneys, pork-pies, eggs, and honey-comb—when Mr. Langhton's story "sent," to use her own expression, "all their wits a wool-gathering." The result was a scene of disorder rarely witnessed in that orderly house.

The tea-caddy fell from its mistress's grasp upon the floor; the tea-kettle, in Rachel's trembing hands (for Rachel had

helped to spoil Katy from the time she was a month old) first sopped the buttered cake and then half-deluged the tea-tray; whilst the coffee-pot, wielded by the rosy-cheeked Sally, had well-nigh spilt its boiling contents on that pet of pets, the fat spaniel, Flora, who, too lazy to get out of the way, and accustomed to the observance of all around her, looked up astonished at the general confusion.

Mrs. Warner, however, by this time recovered from her emotion, vindicated Mr. Langhton's opinion of her calmness, by assuming the direction of the tea-table. Another hot cake made its appearance, and the conversation resumed its desultory course. A dozen such surprises would not have silenced Mrs. Bell.

"I am sure," said she, "that this great fortune all comes from my having carried Katy, when we were in London last year, to see Mr. Strange at that place which he

called an Inn, but which, so far as I could make out, is not an Inn at all. That visit was the cause of this good luck."

"The Will is dated twenty years ago," observed Mr. Langhton.

"Never mind that," persisted she; "what does the date signify? I am quite sure that our visit did it all. But at first, to be sure, he seemed rather put out by being called down to that little place of a Lodge; and seemed to doubt if we were really his cousins from Atherton, till I showed him a great basket with a Michaelmas goose and a turkey and chine, and some lean-meats."

"Ah!" quoth Mr. Langhton, "so he recognised them?"

"Yes; and desired that when we sent up a hamper at Christmas, we should put in some turnips and carrots to eat with the chine, and plenty of sweet herbs to stuff the turkey; and, above all, he charged us not to forget to pay the porterage as well as the carriage.

"He was willing to remove any doubts that you might entertain respecting his identity. Did he say nothing to my little queen here?"

"He seemed mightily taken with her," replied the good mother; "chucked her under the chin, and desired her to give him a kiss."

"That was less peculiar," observed the old lawyer. "Many a man might have made that request, and have invented the relationship on purpose."

"I did not kiss him, though," interrupted Katy, raising her head from her grandmother's lap, as she sate leaning against her knee.

"He was mightily taken with her, nevertheless," resumed Mrs. Bell; "and fumbled for a long time in those ragged pockets of his to find a halfpenny to give her. I have kept it myself," continued she, fumbling in her turn in a huge pocket

which sent forth a jingling sound of many keys, mixed with thimbles, scissors, nutmeg-graters, knives, slate-pencils, a small padlock, a string of buttons, and money of all denominations. The treasure in question, the miser's gift, was carefully hoarded in an old-fashioned housewife. "I have kept it," said she, "partly as a curiosity, partly for luck—you see there's a hole in it. Katy's so careless, that I was afraid to trust it with her, for fear of her losing it, or giving it to the first beggar she met. And you see how right I was, and what luck it has brought her after all."

"The poor old halfpenny!" cried Katy, again looking up. "You will give it to me now, dear mamma: will you not? No fear that I should lose it now; I shall keep it as long as I live in memory of one who meant me so kindly. And yet it will be very bad luck if this legacy takes me from you, grandmamma, and from dear Atherton."

"But the legacy will neither take you from Atherton, or from grandmamma. I am your guardian, and your dear grandmamma will be joined with me in the trust; and she and your good mother will receive a large allowance for taking care of you."

"Ah! how good they have always been! what care they have taken of me when I was nothing but a trouble to them!" exclaimed the heiress.

"And now I must be going. What shall I send you from London? Think what you want."

"Oh! I have never wanted anything in all my life."

"Then you have been happier than most people," said the lawyer. "But think again. If you want nothing for yourself, do not you want something for others? Your good mamma, does she want nothing?" added he, in a low voice.

The colour rose in Katy's cheek.

"Let me whisper in your ear, Mr. Langhton; it's a secret. Could you, do you think, get in London four great, strong, beautiful cart-horses — perfect beauties?"

"Yes."

"Handsomer than Mr. Thorp's, the miller? Mamma has always had such a hankering after a bell-team like Mr. Thorp's. But I should like it to be finer than his. So would she. She would like that better than anything in the world, if you could manage it."

"I think it may be contrived. We shall see. Anything else?"

"And a new jacket and trowsers—a whole suit—for little Jacob Stokes. He takes care of my pony; and helps in my garden; and, poor boy, he is as ragged as a colt. And a new stuff-gown for poor Dame Barnes; and another—"

"Stop my queen, stop. You shall have money for jackets and gowns. But grandmamma—do you want nothing for the dear grandmamma?"

"Could you get a book called 'Sir Charles Grandison,' do you think? Grandmamma was saying the other day she should like to read it over again. I wonder if it's as charming as the 'Arabian Nights!' And money to give away in cloaks and blankets. Let that be sent to grandmamma. Ah! I wish that all the fortune had been left to her! She would have spent it so much better than I shall ever do."

"You will spend it none the worse, my dear, for mistrusting yourself. Bless God that you have such an example and such an adviser in all serious matters. And for the things which young ladies are expected to know in this wicked world, the common ways of what is called society, we

must look about for a guide. Do you see much of the good folk at the Rectory, Mrs. Warner? Mrs. Glenham is an elegant woman. I should think that her daughters would be nice companions for Katy?"

"The girls are still very young," replied Mrs. Warner: "children of ten and eleven. And we see less of Mrs. Glenham than formerly."

"Mrs. Glenham calls Katy a romp," added Mrs. Bell, in an affronted tone.

"She has never forgotten an unlucky nutting party in Atherton Wood, where frocks were torn, and bonnets crushed, and slippers lost," said the grandmother, smiling.

"I am sure it was all the fault of her own two sons," resumed Mrs. Bell. "There is not so rude a boy as Charles Glenham in all Atherton."

"Harry is not rude," interposed Katy. "He's the kindest creature in the world."

"It's more than can be said of his prim sisters, or his fine lady mother," rejoined Mrs. Bell. "She told me to my face that my daughter set hers a bad example. A bad example! Let her look at home. If Katy does get into a scrape now and then, whose fault is it, I wonder? When she happened to be riding Jacob Stokes's donkey, and the animal put his fore feet into a ditch, and sent her over his head—was not it because Charles Glenham started out of the opposite hedge, blowing a cow-horn?"

"But Harry picked me up," quoth Katy.

"And when Lord Delancy caught her in our orchard, perched in the middle of a cherry-tree—was not it because Master Charley had carried off the ladder?"

"Harry helped me down, mamma. Remember that."

"Well! Of course a great lad just going

to College is not quite so bad as his younger brother. But for my part, I'll have nothing to say to the Glenhams. Mrs. Glenham to lecture me, and call Katy incorrigible!"

"You are quite right, Mrs. Bell. We'll have nothing to say to them. And now I must be off to the Hall. Farewell, dear lady. Good-bye, my queen."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAWYER.

STEPHEN LANGHTON was, as the reader will have gathered from the preceding pages, a great London solicitor.

Forty years before he had left this very village of Atherton, of which his father was rector, to join his uncle, the head of an eminent firm in Norfolk Street, Strand. There, as clerk, as partner, and as successor, he had remained ever since; an old bachelor like his predecessor, and like him uniting considerable taste and talent to unblemished integrity and much knowledge of his profession. From him, too, he inherited a trick of making friends of his clients, and taking a fidgety interest in

their prosperity and well-being. A peculiarity which contributed far more to the comfort and advantage of his employers than to his own; since, although in his own person free from all encumbrance (to borrow a favourite advertising phrase), he shared all the anxieties produced by unthrift heirs, unmanageable schoolboys, marriageable daughters, and gullible widows; and was indeed the general adviser, trustee, and executor of all his clients, dead or living.

For those belonging to his native village, he entertained particular affection; especially for Lord Delancy, whose property had been managed by the firm which he represented for upwards of a century; and with whom, although ranking amongst the haughtiest members of the aristocracy, he had lived, from the days when they were playfellows and schoolmates to the present hour, on terms

of fraternal affection and familiarity. And now this interest was deepened and saddened by the storm of adversity, which, after having been gathering for years around his noble friend, seemed likely to crush him to the very earth.

A long-pending suit respecting a disputed will had just been given against him. To feed this suit, mortgage upon mortgage had been granted upon his paternal estates, until those estates would hardly defray the securities with their accumulated interest.

In truth the property itself, extensive and splendid as it appeared, had been involved for many generations. The portions of younger sons, the dowries of daughters, the jointures of widows had prest upon it heavily; and, as so often happens with large nominal estates, each noble proprietor had lived up to his estimated rather than his real income.

There had been no vice amongst them; no gambling by cards or dice, no racing, no profligacy. Taste had been their worst enemy. One ancestor had restored the old baronial castle from which their title was derived in a northern county; another had built the splendid mansion of Atherton Hall. The late Lord Delancy had worthily filled the noble picture-gallery designed by his progenitor; and the present had furnished the library with equal regard to everything except expense: whilst all of them had practised largely the unprofitable virtues of hospitality, generosity, independence, and disinterestedness. There were no place-holders or place-hunters in their long line.

Their very pride, and proud they were, was based upon a scorn of meanness in every form.

In the present head of that old house, a

peculiar sense of locality, a clinging to early feelings would, Mr. Langhton knew, add tenfold bitterness to the bitter draught which he had to administer. At Atherton he had been born. There he had wooed and wedded the beautiful wife whose untimely death had left him a bereaved and solitary man. Four lovely children, of whom the youngest only survived, had been born there; and three had been buried in the same church with their mother—the same church where their parents' marriage had been celebrated. Every association of bliss and of sorrow, the joy bells and the funeral knell bound him to Atherton.

"Latterly, indeed, for very love of that dear home, he had resided there less constantly. He could not bear to look upon the scenes he was so soon to lose. But there he was expected this evening to meet his only son, a distinguished young

officer, who, although long absent with his regiment, in the Peninsula, at Waterloo, in France, fully participated in this tenacious fondness for the seat of his ancestors, the home of his youth.

The thought of the unworthy possessor who would step into their place was the bitterest drop of all.

An orphan relation, the son of a cousin-german of Lord Delancy's father, had been educated, fitted out, and sent to India by his generous kinsman. Those were days in which men of good abilities, of a determined spirit, and not too sturdy a morality, still contrived to make fortunes in our Eastern empire. Bold, ambitious, subtle, and supple, Vivian Delancy was the very man to succeed there. He became governor of one of our richest provinces, and wealth gathered round him, no one knew how. Whilst still in the vigour of life, he returned to England in

the full hope (for hitherto everything had prospered with him) that the sickly lord whom he had left and his puny boy would both be dead before his arrival. Some flattering correspondent, who had read his heart too well, and wanted a favour, had sent him word that they were actually dying; and believing what he wished, he expected, on landing in England, to find no obstacle between himself and the ancestral title.

Half of his hope was fulfilled. His kind benefactor was dead; but the young heir had shot into a vigorous man, strong and hardy as one of the oaks in his own park, and was upon the point of marriage to the lovely but unportioned daughter of a country gentleman.

The young lord invited his cousin to Atherton; and with characteristic treachery, partly from love, partly from this old and well-concealed hate (for there is no

greater quickener of a puny love than a deep hatred) the Indian cousin entered the lists as a suitor. The fair Helen, unlike her namesake, proved constant to the betrothed lover who had first won her maiden heart. They were married, but not until calumny upon calumny, insult upon insult, had provoked a challenge, the result of which left Vivian Delancy with a bullet in his shoulder, and a vow of vengeance in his heart.

From this hour the pertinacious and unscrupulous man pursued the ruin of his rival with a bitterness of determination, a concentrated malice which became the ruling passion of his strong nature. He followed vengeance in England as in India he had followed gold, the rather that a remote but patient hope of attaining the ultimate object of his ambition—the family estates; a hope that seemed to grow by delay, mingled with the lust of

revenge, and seemed favoured by circumstances.

An old relation, to whom, had he died intestate, Lord Delancy would have been the legal heir, had long promised to bequeath his great wealth to the head of the house, not merely from affection towards his kinsman, but for the purpose of clearing the family property, and placing the old name in the high position which it had so long occupied in the country. This promise, voluntarily made, increased the carelessness as to pecuniary matters which had been the solitary sin of the race. The pledge had been renewed on Lord Delancy's marriage to a portionless beauty. Mr. Langhton had himself drawn up the will.

Nearly twenty years after, the aged cousin died, and a later will was produced, bequeathing the entire property to Sir Vivian, who had long since, to his infinite

disgust—he, who valued only an old peerage—been included in a batch of baronets. The whole household was in consternation. No one had suspected the intention or the act; and upon a closer investigation, a paper, wanting certain formalities, was discovered, re-bequeathing all to his beloved kinsman and godson, Arthur, Lord Delancy. Then, when this paper was rejected for informality, a third document was discovered—the copy of a letter addressed to the solicitor who had drawn the second will—directing its destruction.

Imagine the materials for litigation in this complication of circumstances! What were the actual facts of the case, nobody could venture to pronounce. No quarrel had taken place between the testator and his declared heir. But they lived in distant counties; the omission of a visit, the misconstruction of a letter, the mere caprice of age, might have caused his

change of intention. On the other hand, the known character of the claimant gave, to all acquainted with him, ample reason for a suspicion of foul play. Witness after witness came forward to give testimony to that effect; and a missing valet was chased over three parts of the globe, who could prove, they said, the writing and the delivery of the letter of which the copy had been produced. The fate of this man was never clearly ascertained; but it was at last supposed, and probably with truth, that he was amongst the passengers who perished in the wreck of a vessel bound to Canada.

Years had passed away in this miserable litigation; anxiety had succeeded to anxiety; suspense to suspense; trial to trial; and now, after enormous expenditure, the final decision had been given against Lord Delancy; and the last lingering hope had died away for ever.

The termination of the great will cause was of course known to all parties; but a far severer blow was yet to come. Suspicions had been awakened that the money so long, and with so fatal a facility, advanced on mortgage, had been lent through a third person. This suspicion was now proved to be correct, and the real mortgagee—he who, after some months and some few formalities, could eject the present occupier from all his ancestral estates; from Delancy, the old northern hold, and Atherton, the beloved home, with their affectionate tenantry and matchless collections, was no other than their adversary in the lawsuit, the ungrateful and revengeful kinsman.

To talk over this painful termination of a cause, of which he had always dreaded the result, was Mr. Langhton's business at the Hall. His hard features twitched as he thought of the conversation he had to

go through. He had armed himself with a choice copy of Lord Berner's Translation of Froissart, as a present to his brother bibliomoniac—a tall copy, in all the glory of its original binding, with silver tips and silver clasps, picked up at a sale fabulously cheap. But he knew that, talk as they might of the chivalrous old chronicler, who seemed born to immortalise high deeds, and of the brave Englishman, who seemed born for no purpose but to translate him, the words might issue from their lips, but their hearts would be far away.

The young heir, too, the gallant soldier, Arthur Delancy, returning to the home of his fathers, only to hear that that home must be abandoned for ever! Arthur, whom he had loved as a son from earliest childhood! "That accursed lawsuit!" thought the good lawyer. And no stronger proof can be given of the sincerity of his interest in his clients than to say, that his

own predictions as to the result having been so completely verified, never once crossed his mind as a consolation.

Such were the dark thoughts which caused Stephen Langhton's foot to rest for a moment on the step of the post-chaise which had waited to convey him to the Hall. Ascertaining, even in the midst of his troubles, the safety of the precious Froissart, he sent in Mrs. Bell and Katy, who had attended him to the door with eager hospitality, and turned to take a parting look at the farm.

There it stood, with the bright fires glowing through the windows in parlour and hall, the glancing lights within the house, and the ruddy glare of lanthorns passing from stable to cow-stall, and from cow-stall to calf-pen, with all its cheerful sights and rural sounds, the very image of rustic plenty. The view brought other speculations to the mind of our good

lawyer. "I found this place," thought he, "the abode of peace and comfort, when I came bearing the tidings of this new wealth to disturb its tranquillity. Can content and wealth keep house together? Can a child, so rich, so pretty, so innocent, and so confiding, be trusted with that simple mother, and that single-minded grandmother? The world is full of snares, even this little world of Atherton. As yet, she had seen nobody more dangerous than the lads of the Rectory, to whom she is probably only a gayer and a wilder sister, a playfellow or a plaything. But how long will this last? Money, and the want of money, form half the trials of this life." Money, and the want of money! the approximation seemed to suggest yet another train of reflections as the chaise threaded the winding village street, and passed through the richly-worked iron gates, and between the stately lodges of Atherton Park.

Even in a November night that fine scenery retained its characteristic beauty. The moon, almost at the full, shed a silvery light upon the dewy lawns; just touching the brown tops of the huge oaks, that stood out as headlands or promontories from the deep woods, which stretched up the hills on either side; or flinging a dark shadow from the clumps of holly, hawthorn, birch, and beech, which, mingled with single trees, dotted the foreground. Just beneath the eye, a broad stream was crossed by a low bridge of several arches, and after many windings, swelled out in the lower portion of the park, into a picturesque lake.

Half-way up the ascent, the mansion, a noble Palladian structure of white stone, lay bathed in the moonshine. The long colonnades which joined the centre to the wings, and the deep-pillared portico, with its rich Corinthian capitals, which swept

down by broad flights of steps to the terrace, and its massive balustrade, gave back the light from pediment to capital, from capital to basement, almost as vividly as at noon-day. A lime-tree avenue, leading to other lodges, just showed through a vista its high-arched branches and chequered ground. The faint odours of the decaying leaves marked the season, and the peculiar scent of a group of towering Lombardy poplars, which rose like columns on a point of land near the bridge, literally perfumed the air.

Perfect tranquillity was the characteristic of the scene. Here and there a majestic swan seemed sleeping on the water, or a single deer, startled by the sound of the rumbling vehicle, darted from its bed of withered fern, under some gnarled and twisted hawthorn, to bound across the lawn. All else seemed at rest; and the house, when,

after half-an-hour's drive, the traveller reached it, might have passed for uninhabited. Such, however, was not the case. The visitor was clearly expected. At the first sound of the wheels, a light appeared in the hall; and before the postilion had rung the bell, two servants flung open the folding doors, and ushered him into the half-lighted library, where father and son advanced to meet him.

CHAPTER V.

FATHER AND SON.

FATHER and son, the two gentlemen to whom Mr. Langhton was conducted, evidently were. In point of figure, tall, erect, and stately,—they might almost have passed for brothers; in face, too, the resemblance was most striking. It was the same head in youth and in age. The general expression was alike in both—grave, thoughtful, calm, and aristocratic. But the guest soon perceived a peculiar look in the elder man—worn, anxious, distressed, which seemed to have added

ten years to his age in as many weeks; deepening the lines about the mouth and on the pale forehead; converting into a permanent frown that which before denoted only pensiveness; sinking his eyes deep under their brows, and robbing them of gaiety and sweetness; thinning and whitening the hair, which three months before had been as brown and as glossy as the crisp curls of his son.

As he grasped the hand of his old friend and schoolfellow, Lord Delancy exclaimed:

"You have no good news for me, Stephen, or youwould have come here earlier. You would have come before the time," continued he, as Mr. Langhton, transferring the Froissart from one arm to the other, began taking out his watch; "I know it is the hour that I mentioned, but with good news you would have flown."

"Nay, my dear lord, I am here as soon as I thought it likely that I should find you

and my young friend. And for my news, that is no worse than it needs must be. You yourself had little doubt but Sir Vivian was the real holder of the mortgages?"

"And now it is sure?"

A sad shake of the head—for a shake of the head may be affirmative, and when so is always sad—was the only answer.

"All the mortgages?" interposed Major Delancy.

"All," was the reply. "He has contrived to buy up every security, although some dated as far back as your great-grandfather's time."

"Well, dear father, surely it is good to know this; good to have no more struggle; good to have done at once with a losing fight; good to relinquish for ever a false position. Let the estates be given up. I am ready to sign whatever papers may be necessary. There may be such; for I

remember once, this man (and for that I thank him) gave me credit for ratifying all that you had promised, and advanced a large sum, without waiting for my signature. That at least proved him not quite a stranger to the blood of the—"

"Oh! my son, my son! to ruin such a son!"

"Nay, my dear father, hear me out. Let all be done at once; all given up, all sold, all paid. Surely the proceeds—"

"Will not be sufficient to pay Langhton's bill," exclaimed Lord Delancy.

"Pshaw! my bill! Wait till I ask for it," interjected the lawyer.

"And of other debts than these mortgages, you know," proceeded Arthur, "that you have wisely kept clear. No honest tradesmen will be ruined by our ruin. The proceeds of such personal property as has never been put in pledge, will, I firmly believe, defray every just

claim, and leave enough for the purchase of such an annuity as will maintain you in comfort and in independence. Or if not, let us dispose of my commission. The world does not want ways by which a young and healthy man may win an honourable livelihood. Even in the midst of this new peace, my own bad trade is not without its prospects. Let me go as a volunteer to India, to South America—wherever warfare flourishes—and you will see that I shall prosper as others have done before me. Only let all be given up at once, and trust me, we shall be happier and richer than we have been during this miserable struggle against an overwhelming destiny. Only let all be given up."

"To him!" exclaimed Lord Delancy, suddenly pausing in the rapid walk up and down the room, by which he had been striving to throw off some of the irritation which shook the bodily frame even to

agony. "Yield to him the home of my fathers! disinherit for him a son of whom the noblest of my ancestors might have been proud! Transfer to him my attached tenants, my affectionate peasantry! Make him the master here, where, bred and fostered like a child of the house, he raised his hand against the son of his benefactor! He left this place vowing eternal gratitude. See," continued he, throwing a tattered letter upon the table; "I found that scrawl the other day. The very ink has faded, as refusing to perpetuate professions so false! the paper has crumbled away like his promises. He left this house poor and abject; he returned to it rich and insolent."

"You disappointed him, my dear lord. He left you a sickly child, never likely to survive the trials of school, and the temptations of college. He expected to find you dead, and there you stood, tall and stout,

on the point of marriage to the prettiest woman in the county."

"Poor Helen! she feared him as an evil spirit."

"She disappointed him too. He expected her to throw over the man of her heart, as fine a young fellow in those days as Arthur is now, in favour of a rival as dry and gnarled and yellow as a bamboo-cane."

"Poor, poor Helen! That rivalship was her first grief, and his threats, vague and worthless as they seemed then, not only embittered but shortened her life."

"Your good father," resumed Lord Delancy, again pausing in his walk, "always said that as a child, a mere child, I had once offended this cousin, then a youth; and that his hatred dated from that hour."

"For my part," returned Stephen, "I firmly believe that the hatred and the love

were both subservient to the ambition. He courted Helen Aubrey, in the hope of preventing your marriage, whilst he accomplished his own, taking the chance of your throwing yourself into dissipation, or in any event not speedily settling, so that he might still retain his place as heir-presumptive to the title. The duel had the same object in view; whilst this affair of the will and of the mortgages, is still a step in the same direction. He can't get the old barony; so he'll be content with the old estates."

"He has only to live long enough," observed Arthur, "and he may be the possessor of both; for I do not think my dear father likely to marry, and I am perfectly certain that I never shall."

"Phew! phew!" whistled the old lawyer, a most incredulous whistle it was. "Live to my age before you make a vow of celibacy, and don't be too sure of keeping it then."

"Sir Vivian may soon resume his place in the Peerage, as heir-presumptive," said Lord Delancy. "When the new owner takes possession of the mansion, the old master will find room in the family vault."

"Dear father!"

"Lord Delancy!"

And the one speaker led him affectionately to a seat: whilst the other instinctively laid a strong grip on the travelling-pistols, which, mixed with other loose baggage, the servants had thrown on one of the tables.

"Nay, Stephen, you may spare that precaution—I had no intention to alarm you, my dear son. But more men die of a broken heart than we read of in the bills of mortality. And to think that my own obstinacy and improvidence should have aided this man's villainy, to disinherit such a son as Arthur, might kill a stronger man than I."

"I will not listen to such words, dear father!"

"Nor I," quoth Stephen. "Besides, I have a remedy in my head."

"Do you remember, Arthur," said his father, "the beautiful group of witch-elms on the west lawn? Artists used to travel from London to sketch them. There was a tradition that under them the family plate had been buried in Cromwell's time, when, what with sieges, fires, and sequestrations, our declension began. Well! the tallest of these trees was stricken, they tell me, by the great gale this equinox—"

"And falling luckily," interrupted Stephen, "against the tree next in point of size, and nearest in point of situation, was propped by that friendly supporter; so that it has been found possible to replace the noble tree, (you know how clever a fellow Lawson the woodman is!)

and there it stands, the goodly witch-elm, as firmly rooted as ever. Omen for omen, my good lord! Mrs. Bell and Katy, to the full as superstitious as yourself, went to see it yesterday. They told me the whole story but now."

Lord Delancy shook his head, as unwilling to accept the augury. The son and the friend gazed for a moment on that other noble tree, which seemed quivering to its fall. Their eyes met. But Stephen's tone had lost nothing of its cheerfulness, as he exclaimed suddenly:

"Apropos to Mrs. Bell's tea-table, where I heard this news, you seem to forget that neither you nor Arthur have taken any dinner, and that I myself, although fresh from that region of hospitality, shall be none the worse for a cutlet and a glass of wine. I have a project for you, my good friends, for both of you, and for that determined bachelor, Master Arthur, in particular; a

project to propose, and a story to tell. But not a syllable shall you hear until you have taken some refreshment. Besides which, this affair of the mortgage is in no such hurry. Some impertinent wit has said that 'luckily law always takes time to do justice.' Now I append to that, speaking in honour of the mistress whom I serve, that to commit injustice, Law also takes her leisure. The notice of foreclosure is not served yet. And after that, we have six months good. Let us go to dinner; after which we can talk matters over calmly. Some very strange events have occurred within these few days, events altering the prospects of some of these good folks at Atherton not a little."

"Good folks of Atherton!" cried Arthur. "What can that mean? Our friends of the Rectory?"

"Ha! I am glad to see that you have sense enough to be curious, Major. They

call curiosity a female passion, but I call it a search after knowledge, and would not give up my right to a fair share of so good a quality to any woman in the world. However, you must keep your spirit of inquiry under subordination for the present, for not a syllable shall you hear until dinner be fairly past."

"Relentings on the part of your cousin!" quoth Mr. Langhton, some two hours after the foregoing conversation, when a few glasses of champagne had brought a little blood into Lord Delancy's cheeks, "sales to some other party! Pshaw! he has your title-deeds as closely locked up as his own heart. No, my plan has nothing to do with mortgages or parchments. It bears a far more attractive form. What do you think of matrimony, Arthur? A man is never so near to becoming a bridegroom as when he has just made a vow to die a bachelor. What

say those excellent reporters, the dramatists? Look into all the cases from Benedick downward. My proposal is neither more nor less than a pretty young wife."

The suddenness of this announcement startled both his hearers, transferring to Arthur's countenance the paleness which had before overspread his father's.

"You have often said, my dear boy, that you would do anything in the wide world to avert this misery. And I fully believe you, for all that lay in your power in the way of self-sacrifice, you have done. If you had not broken the entail to pursue this long law chase, the estates here and in the north, would have been preserved to you. Of you, therefore, I feel certain. What I have to ask on your part, my dear lord, is the sacrifice of a little pride of birth and alliance. Nothing else. For besides

that the money, far more than enough to clear every debt, is absolutely in my own hands, the little heiress through whom it must be won, is as good, and as pretty, and as certain to grace your old coronet, as if she were a duke's daughter."

And then he told the story of Katy's legacy, and how the thought of a marriage between the two young people, each of whom had undergone so strange a transition of fortune, had darted into his thoughts. His strong feeling for both parties lent truth and earnestness to the manner in which he set forth his project; oversetting with much dexterity, Lord Delancy's objections, and opposing with characteristic skill the portrait of Sir Vivian, lord of Atherton, to that of dear, good Mrs. Bell, loud, ruddy, vulgar, and fine, as the mother of his daughter-in-law, a picture from which the fastidious gentleman shrank with instinctive repugnance.

"Never mind Mrs. Bell," quoth our friend Stephen, "I'll answer for her never speaking three sentences in your lordship's presence. Besides, I'll get Mary Osborne to dress her. That little woman, my partner's wife, is a jewel. She is to get a governess for Katy. Never trouble yourself about Mrs. Bell. Think of Mrs. Warner. Sweet old Mrs. Warner! fair, delicate, and simple as a female Friend; fit at this very moment to take her place in your picture gallery. And Katy, think of her; Reynolds might have painted them both. Indeed, they are exactly the pure English beauties that he did paint."

"Remember though," added he, as they rose to take coffee in the library, "that I cannot promise my gallant friend here more than a chance of the young heiress. But considering all things, the hereditary respect for the family; the

habit of thinking Atherton Hall a finer place than Chatsworth, and Lord Delancy a greater man than the Duke of Devonshire; remembering also the advantages of military distinction, and military bearing, to say nothing of other good gifts; and, above all, considering the prodigious power of opportunity, and of being the first to pour sweet truths into the fair lady's ear; putting together, I say, all these elements of success, I entertain very little doubt of carrying off the prize."

"A word with you," said Arthur, stopping Mr. Langhton, as they followed Lord Delancy through the hall, "one word."

"Not if it be an objection," replied the solicitor. "Are you too possessed of the devil called Pride?"

"Pride, situated as we are!" said Arthur. "But this marriage, which after all is mercenary? this availing ourselves

of a position which is totally changed? of advantages which are vanished? My dear father, carried away by his notions of family dignity, and by paternal partiality, does not see this; but you—"

"Be quite sure that every particular of your situation shall be made known to Mrs. Warner before to-morrow night. And be sure, also, that with her feeling towards you and my good lord, the prospect that this wealth may prevent the great wrong that would otherwise take place, will be one of the consolations for the dangerous change in her sweet child's destiny. Both she and Mrs. Bell expressed strong alarm at the chance of her falling into the hands of some one who would look down upon her, or teach her to look down on them. They will seek for nothing but high character in Katy's husband. Neither shall I. And I never gave so strong a proof of my respect and

esteem, as well as my affection, as when I selected you as the happy man. Have you any other objection to offer?"

"Only my utter averseness to the marriage state."

"Averseness! Does that mean a fancy for another woman? Are you in love? Are you engaged?"

"No, upon my honour; I am as free as yourself."

"So much the better. If you had been engaged—"

"I tell you, No. But to marry this young girl merely for her money—"

"Pshaw! pshaw! a romantic scruple like that is an anachronism in these days. Leave me to take care of my ward. Look at your father. Four hours ago, I would not have insured his life for a month; and now the very chance of escaping from the venom of that cold-blooded Indian snake, has acted upon him like the fabled

elixir. You, too, are fitted for another age, with your hatreds and your delicacies. But just think of him, and of all the sacrifices you have made, and do not render them vain by starting off at last. Sacrifice!" exclaimed he with enthusiasm, "I ought to be hanged for using the word in connection with the brightest and sweetest little rosebud that ever blossomed in a country garden. And you ought to be hanged if you are not over head and ears in love with her before three months are past. Take the word of an old man who has seen a good deal of this best of all possible worlds, and has had occasion to observe pretty often that in fulfilling our duties at the expense of our fancies, we are generally sure to be rewarded even in this life. Would not any one think I was urging you to marry the Urganda of a fairy tale?"

"I don't care for beauty," interrupted Arthur."

"I do," said his companion, "in common with most men. And you will be a person of a singular taste if you do not think her beauty of a very attractive sort. Now let us go to your father. I have a present for him in his way and mine; a choice old book, picked up for a song. I did not dare produce it before; but by this time, thanks to our project, he'll be able to look at and enjoy it. Is not this worth something, Master Mercenary?"

CHAPTER VI.

HEIR-HUNTING.

On his return to town, one of Mr. Langhton's first visits was to the abode of his partner, Mr. Osborne, a clever man of five-and-thirty, who, originally an articled clerk in the house, had been taken into the firm without money, on the strength of his abilities and his character—points in which the senior partner was seldom mistaken. A year or two before he had taken to himself the questionable luxury of a wife; and our old bachelor, fond, after his fashion, of James Osborne, and

accustomed to command his society at breakfast and dinner, grumbled over a measure which threatened to deprive him of his company during many a quiet evening in Norfolk Street. "Now," thought he, with the grunt of a deeply-injured man, "he'll be going home."

Matters were not greatly mended when he found that Mr. Osborne made of his young wife a universal authority and referee in all matters extra-legal, even when they seemed most unfit for a wearer of petticoats. If Mr. Langhton happened to inquire:

"What did that De Bry fetch at Evans's?" the answer was:

"I'll ask Mary."

If, "What can I have done with the Dugdale?"

"Mary can tell."

Mary could get an authentic copy of the Ban of the Empire. Mary

knew where to send for the score of the "Requiem."

The clouds began to disperse when Stephen discovered that Mrs. Osborne really knew those things of which her husband boasted, and she did not; and the sky grew quite clear when he heard from his housekeeper that his Kendal pudding was made from her recipe, and that his warm winter hose were knitted in the charity school of her father's parish; in short, that she was not that odious thing, a female Encyclopædia, but an observing and intelligent woman, who knew where to find knowledge, and considered no trouble too great, no object too small, so that it enabled her to gratify her husband's friend.

"She's a clever little body," thought our friend; and will have performed my commission, if anybody can, and found me a governess who will teach dear Katy

to conceal the adorable ignorance which would affront this accomplished age; and fill at the same time, the part of adviser-general at the farm. To think that it should fall to my lot to conduct a whole feminine household; I, who have always eschewed the company of women! and to have the disposal of a great heiress—I, an old bachelor of fifty-seven! Poor, pretty Katy! I wish Arthur Delancy liked her better. But he's a noble fellow, and the love will come in time. She cannot choose but like him; she who has seen nothing better than the Glenham boys, and the clodhoppers of the village."

This meditation brought him to the tasteful cottage at Chelsea, where his partner had fixed his abode. He found Mrs. Osborne, and lost no time in inquiring if her search had been successful.

"Yes, I know such a person," replied his hostess, with rather more hesitation

than was usual with her; "exactly such a person as you desire."

"Well?"

"And she has requested me to look out for a family in want of a governess."

"Well, then, send for her directly."

"There is not far to send, Sir; she is in this very house. But she is my old school-fellow and very dear friend; and I cannot bear to think of her filling a dependent situation. She is the orphan daughter of an officer. Her father and her only brother died shortly after each other; her mother she had lost before; and an aunt with whom she went to reside, turning out that terrrible thing, a match-maker." (Here Mr. Langhton winced a little, and uttered an audible grunt, so that the fair speaker interrupted her narration.) "Surely, dear Sir, you have no love of husband-hunting chaperons, who hawk about poor girls for the highest bidder?"

"None whatever. But as to match-making, that is a different matter. There are matchmakers and matchmakers, as Molière's Sganarelle says of faggots. Go on with your story."

"Well, finding herself put up to sale, and her aunt indignant at her refusal of a man utterly unworthy of her, poor Honor wrote to me, requesting me to inquire for a situation as governess—any situation, the more retired the better, where she might earn an honest living. And here she has been for the last three weeks, during which time, Sir, we have seen too little of you, or I am sure you would like her."

"You mean Miss Clive, my dear? I do like her, and I like her spirit. She will be much happier with good Mrs. Warner, than with all the husband-hunting aunts in the world. She'll be the very person to form Katy. Those soft, gentle

manners are just what we want at the Great Farm."

"And she is so good, Sir," said Mrs. Osborne, much gratified by this approbation. "Mind, manners, and temper are equally excellent. As for her accomplishments—"

"Spare me the emuneration: good sense, good principles, and good temper, are what we want. The fewer accomplishments the better for my little rustic. The new fortune will be disadvantage enough. Do not let us add new knowledge. Nothing is so bad as an attempt at acquiring that which there is no time to learn. It is combining pretence and pretension. Engage Miss Clive, of course, not as a governess, but as a friend. I give you carte-blanche as to salary."

"But, dear sir, I know her well, and am confident that she will not accept more than is right and usual. You will find

her an untractable person on certain points."

"I shall like her all the better. How could this aunt of hers venture to propose an unworthy marriage to such a woman! I leave you, my dear, to arrange matters for me. Contrive, if you can, that Miss Clive should be ready to accompany me to Atherton as soon as may be after my return from Buckinghamshire."

The good lawyer's expedition to Buckinghamshire was another branch of the duties thrown upon him by this executorship.

During his absence, an artificer, cunning in the miser's paraphernalia of false bottoms and secret drawers; springs that no eye could detect, and locks that no hand could open, disclosed in the deepest profundity of an iron chest, a cavity filled with bank-notes and bills, at once more portable and more negotiable than the

bulkier bonds, mortgages, and title-deeds which crammed almost to bursting the upper part of the coffer. Strange is the contrast of these yellow parchments and discoloured papers, ghastly representatives of wealth, to the hoards on which our ancestors delighted to luxuriate: the kingly coin, stately with its crowned impress; the heavy ingots of glittering silver or virgin gold; the ropes of pearl; the dazzling heaps of precious stones, ruby, topaz, amethyst, emerald, sapphire, diamond; such were the rich sights on which the misers of Massinger and Ben Jonson gloated. Those great old poets would have scorned this unimaginative age, where Mammon, stripped of all his gorgeous accessories, shows himself in all his naked deformity, barely covered by a sordid panoply of rags.

In that innermost receptacle of the money-chest, so cunningly hidden, were two or three papers, which seemed at first

to have small reference to the cheques and bank-bills by which they were surrounded. Their pecuniary value was indeed very trifling. The first document was an old almanac of the year 177—. The others consisted of two or three notes, of which the writer was evidently a woman, addressed to Mr. Richard Strange, and signed E. Brown; a note of hand for twenty pounds, bearing the signature of John Brown; and the rough copy of a letter, at once a declaration of love and a proposal of marriage, to which, on perusal of one of the notes, was a gentle refusal.

Here was a curious episode in a miser's life. The rough draft of the love-letter was brief and characteristic, but not ineloquent. True feeling always finds true words. Very real must that passion have been which induced Richard Strange to offer his hand to a girl evidently without fortune, and induced him to name her de-

scendants the heirs of so large a portion of his riches, after an interval of nearly fifty years. The notes signed "E. Brown" were dated Weston; but that address, which indeed they already possessed, was the only indication to be gained from this love hoard. The almanac at first appeared to bear no relation to the event. But in the months of July and August were found small marginal notes, such as "Walked in the woods with Betsy." "Bought a keepsake for Betsy." "Wrote to Betsy." And on the succeeding day was a final note, summed up in two brief words:—"Went away."

Our old bachelor sighed over those brief words, sympathizing the rather with the suffering, that the sufferer had abstained from all complaint, even to that mute confidant, the almanac. How different might his life have been had that offer been accepted.

Turning to his own business, Mr. Langhton felt that no further revelation was to be expected from the testator's papers. Advertising was his only hope. Indeed, the moment the cavity was discovered, Mr. Osborne had multiplied advertisements, thicker and wider, in almost every newspaper in town and country. These advertisements were, as usual, fruitful in answers. The Norfolk Street postman bent under their weight, and doubted whether Valentine's Day had not come before its time.

Every Weston in England had produced its record of John or Elizabeth Brown. Some a John; some an Elizabeth; some both. Here they were christened; here married; here buried. The good lawyer groaned in spirit; the rather that the indications were so slight that it would be almost impossible for the most practised and subtle tracer of genealogies to follow

such a trail. However, as the Buckinghamshire Weston (Cowper's Weston) offered the nearest approach to the family group which he dimly guessed at, a John Brown having been married, and an Elizabeth Brown christened there about twenty years before the date of the almanac, he resolved to undertake the journey; unconsciously, perhaps, influenced by a desire to examine the scenery of the "Task," a poem which, in its purely English feelings, its homeliness, and its teachings, appealed strongly to his sympathies and his prejudices.

Upon his arrival at the little inn he found that it was already the object of no unfrequent pilgrimage.

"Old inhabitant, Sir?" quoth a voluble waiter. "Mr. Cowper of course. Plenty of people who remember him hereabouts. Very shy, Sir! But very kind-hearted."

Here Stephen attempted to interpose a word.

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"Parish Clerk, Sir! No use, Sir! Won't find Mr. Cowper in the Register. Gentleman came last summer, and hunted it all through. Was not born here, Sir! Was never married! and died many a good mile away, poor gentleman. Not in the Register I assure you."

Again Mr. Langhton tried to explain his wants.

"Not Mr. Cowper, Sir! Not the great poet! Bless me, Sir! People of the name of Brown? Yes, Sir. I'll ask directly. Would you not like to look at Mr. Cowper's house, meanwhile, Sir? Get you a boy in a minute. All the boys know the way. Want to know about the Browns, and to see the old people? Yes, Sir. Directly, Sir. Plenty of old women, Sir; know two close by, Sir, who have lived here all their lives. Mr. Cowper, poor gentleman, was very good to one of them, and so were Mr. Hayley, and Mr.

Johnson. Fetch them, Sir? Yes, Sir. They shall be here as soon as you have eaten your dinner, Sir. Broiled fowl and mushrooms, Sir? Yes, Sir. In a jiffy, Sir."

Meanwhile, Mr. Langhton having ascertained that the clerk could only tell him what the Register told; and that the cramped, uneven signature of the bridegroom therein, bore no sort of resemblance to the bold characters of the John Brown in the note of hand, did actually, in spite of his disclaimer to the waiter, solace himself by a visit to the house which the poet loved so well, and which drew from him perhaps the most pathetic letter on record—that in which he recognizes his own malady by the touching words, "I will forget that a letter from me can only be regarded as a curiosity."

Musing over the sad mystery of that strange affliction; the alternations of

darkness and light, the enchanting playfulness of the letters, and Hayley's affecting narrative of the long, miserable years that preceded his death, a story full of wilder contrasts and deeper poetry than any which the poor poet ever wrote, our friend forgot how time went, and found the little waiter much propitiated by the length of his absence, and a glimpse of the volume which he carried in his hand.

"Dinner ready? Yes, Sir. Got quite cold. Warm it in a trice, Sir, Thought you'd never come here without visiting the Poet's house, Sir. A good deal changed, but something left still, Sir. Thought you'd visit the old walks, and the Hall, Sir. Talk of taking it down, Sir. Glad you came first. Got the old women? Yes, Sir. See them now, Sir? Before dinner? Yes, Sir."

And he produced two crones, who in point of age might have officiated as wit-

nesses, or if needful, as bridesmaids at John Brown's wedding seventy years before. Their examination nearly drove our friend Stephen crazy. One was paralytic, the other deaf.

The palsied hag was possessed with one single idea (her Brunonian theory) of a Jesse Brown, whom she had known in her youth, and who lay buried in the churchyard, having died when a promising youth, "fourteen year old and a bittock." Apparently he was alone in his generation; for to every question respecting his probable kith and kin, father, mother, brother, sisters, uncle, aunt or cousin, every possible owner of the desired christian names, she returned no better answer than a stolid "No." Whilst her brisker partner was so deaf that she would hardly have heard a pistol fired at her ear, could not read, and all the shouting of the enraged lawyer and his ally the waiter, who

brought all his powers of speech to bear on the object, failed to drive into her head the sound of Brown, or of any other monosyllable, proximate or remote. The old woman looked, and was thoroughly mystified. At last a bright illumination flashed upon her. The one name of the place sprang from her lips:

"Ay, Sir, of course, Mister Cowper! Nobody can tell you more of him, poor gentleman. I chared for Madame Unwin—"

What might be the exclamation that escaped from her hearer she heard not, nor need we inquire. Never was Stephen Langhton known to swear before or since. And if in that moment the words were naughty, the provocation was great. One thing is certain: that flinging his tormentors half-a-crown apiece, he drove back to London, determined, for the health of his soul and body, to eschew personal

encounters with chattering waiters and stupid old women; and to refer the inquiry to the geniuses of the Chancery Court or the Herald's Office, who can track a genealogy for half a century, through no clearer indications than a torn letter or a defaced tombstone. The race of Detectives had not yet found a name, but the speciality has never been wanting. And our friend, both as a man of the world, and a great London lawyer, had a faith that nothing could remain secret in the face of a large reward. "This is a question of supply and demand," thought he, "money wants Betsy Brown, and money must find her."

CHAPTER VII.

KATY'S LEGACY. THE NEWS OF ATHERTON.

Our story returns to the Great Farm at the moment of the discovery.

The news of Katy's legacy spread like wildfire through the village of Atherton. In spite of her mother's quarrel with Mrs. Glenham, the good grandmother had a deep respect for her pastor, as well for his character as his office; as, indeed, no sounder scholar or better man ever edited a play of Euripides. She fully intended to call upon him the next morning and carry herself the grand intelligence; but long before Mr. Langhton had left her lit-

tle parlour, the story was patent in every corner of the place, the Rectory included.

Indeed, when we remember that Rachel and her undermaidens, the rosy-cheeked Sally, and Dinah the plump dairy-girl, were present at its announcement, the wonder would have been if it had remained a secret.

Rachel, half beside herself with delight, could not help giving vent to her ecstasy to her old fellow-servant, Joseph Stokes, as he sate gravely discussing his bargain with the dealer; and thereupon, between joy and gin-toddy, Joseph was beguiled into the very worst exchange of sheep for horned cattle that he ever made in his life.

Sally, the belle of the village, communicated the intelligence to two village beaux who paid homage to her rosy cheeks; a young carpenter and a younger blacksmith, jointly engaged in repairing a plough.

Dinah naturally told her tidings to the herdsman who drove the cows to the milking and the lad who helped her to milk.

Joseph told barnsmen, ploughmen, shepherds, and boys; and his little grandson, Jacob, who had picked up the news from the very first without any telling at all—to use his own phrase, "promiscuous like," —little Jacob told everybody.

If verification were needed, it was supplied by Mrs. Bell herself, who sallied forth from the parlour, bearing a bottle in either hand, followed by her daughter with sugar and lemons, bent on compounding a noble bowl of punch, such a bowl as had not been seen at the Great Farm since Katy's christening.

At the "Eight Bells," at the "Delancy Arms," at the shop, at the forge, nothing was talked of that night but Katy's legacy. And considering the general aversion which is said to prevail in our poor

human nature, towards the good fortune that alights on other people's heads, and misses our own, it is creditable to our villagers to be able to record that they bore the glad tidings with fortitude and resignation.

Mrs. Warner's constant charity—charity of thought and speech, as well as of action—contributed doubtless to this result. It is difficult to speak evil of one who never says an unkind word of others. But that which most conciliated goodwill, was the universal impression of the young heiress's open hand.

"Well, little Miss is not so bad."

"I know no harm of *she*."

"I don't think she takes after her mother."

(Dear Mrs. Bell played in this interlude the part of Alcibiades' dog's tail.)

"She'll not steal the bread from a poor creature's mouth."

"She's good to body and beast."

Such were the general exclamations. And Katy vindicated the justice of public opinion in Atherton that very night; for after stuffing Flora with as much cream and buttered toast as that overfed favourite, who had never in her life known the pleasant sensation of a little gentle hunger, could be prevailed upon to swallow; she rescued her own particular attendant, Jacob Stokes, from the dangers of the punch-bowl, and seduced him into the stable, where they jointly committed petty larceny by opening certain bins of oats and beans well known to both, and bestowing a large benevolence of these luxuries, first on her own pony, next on Jacob's donkey, (formerly Katy's, but presented to Jacob when she and her side-saddle were promoted to her present steed); then indiscriminately to all the horses within reach of the accomplices.

After which they finished their evening's expedition by running down the lane to Dame Barnes's cottage, with such a basket of provisions, that the good woman declared that she and her three little grandchildren should not get through it in a week.

"To think," added she, "that Miss should have promised me a new gown! that in the midst of all this grandeur she should recollect a poor old creature that can only pray God to bless her!"

Perhaps Katy's happiest moment in that first night of almost boundless affluence, was this brief visit to Dame Barnes's hut.

The news reached the Rectory after the zig-zag fashion peculiar to country places, and with the exaggerations and variations common to all places, whether city or village.

The gardener, to adopt his own version,

"happened to call at the 'Eight Bells,'" (he happened to call at one alehouse or another on most evenings), "and there he heard it was quite true, however strange it sounded, that Miss Katy had become a queen. He did not know of what foreign parts, but a queen she was, and with more money than the Queen of Sheba."

N.B. It is just possible that the pet name bestowed upon her long ago by Mr. Langhton had something to say to that accession of dignity.

Mrs. Glenham laughed in scorn.

Then the housemaid went for a ball of cotton to the shop, and brought word back that, Lord Delancy's titles and estates had fallen to Mrs. Warner.—Strange it is to trace those rumours that float in the air like thistle-down; pregnant warnings of the calamities of great houses!

Mrs. Glenham remained incredulous.

Next the carpenter brought at once a new bootjack and the real story, as he had received it from Sally, an ear-witness.

The Rector's lady, faithful to her doubts, began yet to suspect that some grains of truth might be mixed up with a mass of falsehood.

At last, the Rector's churchwarden, an intelligent man, and a native of Atherton, coming in to leave some papers, confirmed and explained the intelligence. He himself knew Mr. Strange, and was aware of the relationship; he had even heard, moreover, of his wealth. Besides, the quarter from whence the intelligence came, removed all possibility of error. Mr. Langhton was the most accurate of men; one who had never uttered an untruth or made a mistake in his whole existence.

Mrs. Glenham was astounded. This

was the little girl whose influence over her eldest son, the pride of her heart, she had so much dreaded. Ever since she had discovered certain stanzas to Laura, enclosed to her address, and had observed that his walks and rides, whichever way they seemed to tend on leaving home, invariably ended at the Great Farm, she had exerted all her address to keep the young people asunder. Her only comfort had been that the Laura of his rhymes seemed quite unconscious of the ardent poet's devotion, and in all their walks and parties, preferred the wild gaiety of Charles. She had expended all her skill and contrivance in parting those whom she would now give ten years of her life to bring together. It was just one of the reproofs so often administered by events to our wisest plans; and Mrs. Glenham, a clever woman, somewhat tinged by worldliness, but by no means the worthless fine

lady that Mrs. Bell thought her, felt its full force. In this mood she repaired to her husband's study.

There sat he, kindest and simplest of men, surrounded by his books, in the midst of various editions and German commentatators, intent upon a much-disputed passage in a chorus of the Troades, and very unwilling to be disturbed, even if the house were on fire.

"Upon my word, Dr. Glenham," said his provoked lady, when she had twice poured her tale into unlistening ears; "it is a great pity that you ever left Cambridge. You are fit for nothing but to be a Fellow of a College and a Greek Professor."

"It is a pity," was the reply, delivered with provoking simplicity. "A College Fellowship is free from disturbance and care; and to have succeeded Porson would have been a noble destiny—I beg your pardon, my dear; I believe you have been

talking to me," continued he, with returning recollection; and when he at last caught the sense of her narrative, she had no cause to complain of any want of interest in the subject.

They talked it over in all its bearings, and the affectionate manner in which the good Rector spoke of the parishioners upon whom so trying a change of fortune had fallen so suddenly, emboldened Mrs. Glenham to say:

"Ay, now it would have been better for all parties, if we had encouraged Harry's admiration for our young friend. Her fortune—"

"Harry is to be a Fellow of a College, Mrs. Glenham," interrupted the Doctor, now thoroughly awakened to the realities of life, and asserting, with a manliness which became him well, the resolve of a most upright and honourable nature. "He has got King's, and must follow his

career at Cambridge, a career for which he is well fitted. In due time he may, if he see fit, take a living and settle. But as to the nonsense of which you speak, the love and the love-songs, why they have no more vitality than the sickly autumn rose which you are twirling in your hand, or the dead leaves which are falling from the great oak upon the window sill. If I were not sure of this, I would give instant notice to Mrs. Warner; as it is, I shall speak to Harry. I would rather see him the husband of the poorest girl in the village than that he should take advantage of my position as clergyman of the parish, and an old family friend, to pay his court to the rich heiress. It is our place to protect this young girl in a situation of temptation and danger, not to betray her into an unsuitable attachment. And now, my dear, go to your daughters, and leave me to the tragedy which earned for Euri-

pides the title of the most pathetic of poets."

In all her life Mrs. Glenham had never seen her husband so determined. The only comfort was, that being a woman who had walked through the world with her eyes open, she had observed that in these cases a little opposition is no bad fosterer of love, and trusted that her son Harry might prove no exception to the perversity of his kind.

Meanwhile the year rolled on towards its conclusion. Lord Delancy and his son spent a fortnight at the Hall before separating, the one for his regiment, the other for London. The father's heart was lightened, and the daily improvement in his health and spirits cheered and comforted the young soldier.

Before three days had passed, her noble landlord had not failed to visit Mrs. Warner, and to become, as far as her shy-

ness and the recollection of the cherry-tree would permit, familiar with the young heiress. His air and figure and stately bearing made a good deal against the intimacy which he wished to establish, especially whilst they remained in the little parlour, where both he and the Major looked, as Katy afterwards observed, too tall for the room. His lordship returned the compliment, by declaring that poor Mrs. Bell was too broad for that small apartment, and looked in her new mourning not unlike a blackbird in a goldfinch's cage.

Out of doors matters mended; and in spite of the season, Lord Delancy took care to lure Katy out of doors, to visit her bantams, to look at her pony, and to show her a young greyhound which he had brought from the Hall, a beautiful creature of that peculiar hue, which coursers, as he remarked, are sure to miscall, sometimes yellow, sometimes red.

"She has no name yet. What shall she be called, Miss Warner?"

Katy did not speak; indeed, she had hardly ventured to say more than yes or no. But she gathered a flower from a lingering plant of African Marigold, which yet retained its richly-tinctured blossoms in a southern nook, and laid the clustering petals on the glossy head, which, with unfailing instinct, had already sought her caressing hand. Never were colours more perfectly matched.

The father was enchanted, and even Arthur smiled at the unspoken reply.

"Marigold by all means. A capital name. And see, Miss Warner, you have chosen her name, and she has chosen her mistress. You must not reject her. The moment I can get away from London we will have a day's coursing in the Park. See, Mrs. Bell, how she lies down at her fair mistress's feet, as if to take possession."

"My father does not mean Marigold to supplant my friend Flora," added Arthur, for Flora, with similar instinct, had made her court to him; "that in my mind would be a sin. The old favourite is sacred as the old friend. But where the heart is large, as I am sure yours is, we can find room for new friends and new favourites. Mrs. Warner says that Flora is too fat to keep pace with your walks and rides; so Marigold must be the out-door pet, whilst Flora retains her place on the hearth."

And Mrs. Bell with many words, and Katy with smiles and blushes, accepted the gift.

An excellent excuse was this playful and graceful creature for frequent visits from the Hall. During which familiar intercourse Lord Delancy grew as fond of Katy as if she had been already his daughter, whilst an unexpected intimacy sprang up between Arthur, by no means so formid-

able a personage as he looked, and Mrs. Bell. He could hardly prefer her society to her daughter's, except, indeed, as a person whom he could by no chance be called upon to marry; but so it was, that while his father courted Katy for him, he paid suit and service to the comely widow, with whom he laughed and chatted for hours together. She repaid this devotion with interest.

"There is nobody like the Major," quoth she, "nobody in all the world. To think of my having been such a fool as to be afraid of him. He has just sent this beautiful collar for Marigold; only look! it's exactly like a silver bit. And hearken to the little bells; she won't know where the sound comes from. And her name and Katy's on the padlock; a real dog's necklace. Katy, you don't look half grateful enough; not near so grateful as I was to you for that noble team of horses and their

bells. And I know what the Major is going to do besides."

"Well," said Katy, more curious than she chose to appear, "what?"

"Only if I tell you, you will say that I cannot keep a secret."

"Dear mamma, if it be really a secret, don't tell."

"Nobody told me. Suppose—"

"Well, but if it be a secret—"

"I found it out, I tell you. Suppose he has got a new horse for you, and is going to train it himself. What do you say to that?"

Katy listened and blushed, like a woman. Then, like a child as she was, burst into sudden laughter, clapped her hands, and danced about the room, whilst her mother nodded in triumph, and Mrs. Warner, evidently Mr. Langhton's accomplice, looked on with pleased approbation.

So matters stood at Atherton, when its noble master left the Hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GOVERNESS.

ANOTHER fortnight brought a more permanent visitor to the Farm. At the close of a short December day, Miss Clive arrived with Mr. Langhton.

All girls receive with some trepidation that alarming functionary, a governess; and it is probable that she who causes the fear, often feels herself a deeper emotion than she inspires.

Under the peculiar circumstances, all the ladies of the Farm were a little anxious, or, to use Mrs. Bell's phrase, more graphic than elegant, "in a flurry."

Mrs. Warner's head shook more than usual as she received the stranger; Mrs. Bell poured forth questions and hospitalities without stint or measure; and Katy's cheeks, always bright, glowed like damask roses. Except a little paleness, the governess gave no outward sign of disturbance. She had suffered too much not to be perfect in the great lesson of self-command.

"How do you like her?" asked Mr. Langhton of Mrs. Warner, when the younger ladies had taken her to show her her own apartment, and to adjust her dress. "What do you think of her?"

"I think she looks good."

"And pretty?"

The old lady hesitated.

"Ah! I see that you do not. Neither did I at first, delicate, and graceful, and elegant as she is. To be sure, by the side of that bright little queen of ours, everything is dim. But you will think her pretty by-and-bye."

"She must be much better than pretty to have won your heart so entirely," said Mrs. Warner.

"She will soon win yours; of that I am certain. By the way, when she came in, she was a little shaken. She did not know, till I showed her the Hall, that Lord Delancy had a place here; and it seems that she knew him, or some of his family—I think his sister-in-law, Lady Cardonnel—in happier days. She was half-inclined to go back again. The only weakness that I have detected in her, is a shrinking from the recognition of old acquaintances. You know she was an officer's daughter, and lost her father and her only brother within six months of each other. I told her the family was absent, and you must contrive before their return to make her feel that she belongs to you."

"We shall try," said Mrs. Warner.

"And she must take us, young and old, under her wing; for I suspect that the mamma and grandmamma are more taken aback by this great change than the heiress herself. But this young lady, who seems so simple and gentle, with all her elegance, will put us in the way."

Before the end of the evening, Mr. Langhton had the satisfaction to find Katy's shyness disappear, and to see her seated on her old footstool, at the feet of her new friend.

"Do not call me Miss Warner, pray," said she; "I do not know myself by that name. Call me Katy."

"Must I call you Katy?" was the reply. "And suppose I were to make a condition, and ask you to call me Honor?"

"Honor!" exclaimed Mrs. Bell.

"Honora is the real name—not uncommon in Ireland, where my mother was born. But Honor has been my pet name,—my

home name; and it is to the home name that the heart answers."

"We used to christen children after the virtues," said the old lady; and it was a good practice to remind them of their duties."

"Ay," said Mr. Langhton, "such names abound in those fertile records of manners, the old comic writers, not always to edification. That very name of Honor, for instance, has been immortalized in Fielding's great novel. But the Puritans chiefly affected those appellations; and from them the custom has prevailed amongst their American descendants. Faith, Hope, and Charity are common in New England, to say nothing of Prudence and Patience."

"We have a Patience in Atherton," observed Mrs. Bell; "the greatest scold in the parish—Patience Pratt. People call her her Patty Pratt, and pretend that

her name is Martha; but Patience she was christened, though the name has done her little good enough, as her husband knows to his cost. If a woman is born to be a vixen, it does not signify what you call her."

"I shall hold by Honor, though," said Katy. "Honor is a noble name, mamma. I love it dearly."

And the poor governess felt that her pupil was already her friend.

The stone hall opened into the front passage, and another door, exactly opposite, led into an apartment of equal dimensions; which, cold, dreary, and formal-looking in its stiff and scanty plenishing, its faded carpet, covering only half the floor; its dark mahogany furniture; its small Pembroke tables; its chairs and settees, covered with white dimity, had yet in height, and size, and aspect, all that was required to convert the dismal

best parlour into the pleasant, cheerful, family room.

Honor discovered this capability before breakfast on the morning after her arrival; and discovered also another passage, at right angles with the first, which led by an old-fashioned glass door into the pretty court, half-turf, half flower-bed, which swept round two sides of the house; parted from the kitchen-garden by a yew hedge, over which appeared rows of espaliers and groves of orchard trees, a very forest of pear, apple, cherry, plum, medlar, and walnut.

In the centre of the grass-plot, before the glass door, surrounded by a narrow border of mould, was an old sun-dial, beneath which still lingered some of Katy's beloved flowers. There knelt Katy herself, trying to compose a little bunch of such as yet remained, small spikes of mignonette and winter violets,

and singing in a fresh, round voice, a voice youthful and blooming as her cheeks, words new to Honor, but which would have enraptured the heart of Mrs. Glenham. It was an old Irish air, to which, with more feeling for the music than the metre, these irregular lines had been adapted:

"Good morrow! good morrow! soft, rosy, and bright,
Glow the clouds in the east, laughing heralds of light;
Whilst still, as the glorious colours decay,
Full gushes of music seem tracking their way.
Hark! hark!
Is it the sheep bell among the ling?
Or the early milkmaid carolling?
Hark! hark!
Or is it the lark
As he bids the sun good-morrow?"

On hearing Honor's step, the singer paused suddenly, and flew to present her little nosegay. They entered the house together; and when, after breakfast, Mr. Langhton requested commissions for Lon-

don, and Honor had, by a delicate question, suggested to Mrs. Warner the new-furnishing the pleasant best parlour, to which Mr. Langhton added a proposal to convert the stone hall into a dining room; she said, to his surprise and pleasure:

"Be sure amongst the new purchases not to forget a piano."

"Ah! you have relented in your own favour. I thought so."

"I have relented for the general good. If you had been by the old sun-dial this morning—"

"Why, Katy? Stop, my queen!" for the little damsel showed symptoms of running away. "Are you the songstress? Nay, I must hear you."

"I will accompany you," said Honor, moving to fetch her guitar. And laughing, stopping, and beginning afresh, they got through the stanza.

"Is not there another verse?" enquired

Mr. Langhton, after due praise of the singer. "Where did you pick up the song?"

"Harry Glenham taught me," replied Katy, with the most open simplicity. "He wrote that stanza one day when we were talking of the lark flying upward every morning, as if to bid the sun good-morrow. He wrote that verse to some old air, and taught me to sing it; and he talked of finishing the song some day or other. He often does begin things, and talks of finishing them. Harry is idle. His brother says that all poets are so; that it belongs to their trade. He's very good-natured though," continued Katy, "and I like him."

If Mrs. Glenham had heard the tone in which these words were spoken, she would have despaired. It quite reassured the careful guardian, who had begun to think that singing Harry Glenham's songs

might put Arthur Delancy's interests in jeopardy.

This discovery of Katy's musical talent was no small comfort to her governess, who, new to teaching, had justly dreaded the invidious task of instructing one equally new to the process of being taught. Now the lesson assumed the pleasant form of amusement.

Herself an accomplished and enthusiastic musician, she had brought with her a goodly collection of vocal music, both printed and manuscript, and in talking over the books, and playing on the guitar such airs as her young pupil wished to hear, the hours glided by, easily to both parties, happily to one; to the other they were too full of association to be without pain.

Many languages found a place in this miscellaneous collection, French, Italian, German, Spanish, even Latin was there in

the shape of portions of the grand masses of the Church of Rome; and to Honor's great amazement, and a little to her amusement, Katy, whose ignorance of all modern tongues was so complete that she had not distinguished one language from the other, seized on a fine piece of Church music, and began picking out the words with a certain apprehension of the meaning, and a sonorous English pronunciation which would have horrified the Italian composer.

"You know Latin, Katy?"

"Only a very little," said Katy, producing a well-thumbed Eton grammar. "Harry wanted to teach me; but I soon got tired, and mamma said it was boyish, and grandmamma looked ready to laugh, so I left off. The last time the boys were at home they read to me, which I like a great deal better than learning lessons, and what I like I recollect. When I don't care for a thing I forget it."

Here was another lesson in education. Scott and Shakspeare were pleasant text-books, and much history and geography were conveyed to the mind, in company with such thoughts and such creations as awakened every faculty in that fresh and healthful nature. Poetry, above all, she delighted in; and poetry, real poetry, besides the facts it leads to, is the finest form of truth. So, reading with her pupil, singing with her, walking with her, talking with her, loving her, passed Honora's days.

The graver and the sadder business of life held on its way. Christmas brought to Lord Delancy the threatened notice of foreclosure unless the mortgages were redeemed within six months. Separate notices were also sent to the several tenants on his various estates, to pay no more rent after that period to him or to his agents.

The commotion occasioned by a proceed-

ing so unexpected equalled that caused by Mr. Strange's will. It took a form of regret and affection honourable to all parties. The nobleman, so proud and even haughty with his equals, had been, as proud men often are, most affable and most accessible to his inferiors. Living much in the country and amongst his own people, he knew every farmer and every villager on his extensive property. If he loved his old trees, still better did he love the old faces. An excellent landlord, the farmers were sure of indulgence when it was needed, and of justice, rarest of virtues, always. The tradesman had custom; the labourer, employment; the sick, attendance; the children, instruction; the old, relief. When they met, after morning service, in the churchyard, there was a real and a hearty reciprocation of interest in the respectful bows and curtsies which greeted their good lord on every side, and

in the pleasant smiles and kindly words by which those rustic greetings were returned. To lose such a friend would be grief enough, but to lose him for Sir Vivian, the ungrateful kinsman, the treacherous usurper, whom the old tenants remembered and of whom all had heard, would be intolerable. The storm of indignation was universal. Nobody could believe that English law could tolerate such injustice. They thought the whole story a fabrication.

Gradually this incredulity assumed a more positive form. The absence of debt, the regularity of payment, the disbelief of the household, and the quiet manner with which, in accordance with Mr. Langhton's advice, the establishment at the Hall had been kept up, without increase or diminution, looked very unlike the proceedings of a ruined man. And the shrewd ones amongst them—Mrs. Glenham, for instance—who watched the words of the

family at the farm, Katy's anger, her mother's fury, Mrs. Warner's quiet smile, and Stephen Langhton's scornful shrug, might give a tolerable guess as to the manner in which the catastrophe would be averted. So Lord Delancy, on his return to Atherton, found little to remind him of his precarious tenure except an increase of reverence and devotion from all around him; perhaps, to a man of his sensitive temperament, the severest trial that he could encounter.

By Katy he was greeted with delight, although, to her exceeding disappointment—for, like other spoilt children, she expected all her pets to pet one another—he got no farther with Miss Clive than a ceremonious politeness, which she, shrinking from him as from other strangers, repaid with grave respect. Another subject of lamentation with poor Katy was that great English grievance, the weather. A

seasonable frost had set in, and she, longing to see Marigold run, was wishing for an open day as heartily as if she had been the whole Quorn Hunt. To comfort her, Lord Delancy resolved to turn the frost itself into an amusement, and to have a skating party upon Atherton mere. Lady Cardonnel and Major Delancy were expected on the morrow, and on the following day, Mrs. Warner, together with the other ladies, promised to attend. A close carriage was to convey her and Mrs. Bell. The young ladies were to walk.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ICE.

THERE are wintry days in England which have an indescribable beauty, and this was one. The pervading charm was the work of that great magician Hoar-frost. The morning had been misty, but towards noon the sun appeared, softened by a light haze, which gave a pearly tint to the cloudless blue sky, and accorded well with the perfect tranquillity of the landscape. Not a breath of air stirred; and in the perfect absence of wind, the degree of cold indicated by the thermometer was hardly felt.

There was, however, no tendency to thaw. Rime was everywhere. The finest patch of moss on the irregular park-paling, the lichens that roughened the trunks of the great trees that overhung the road, had each its net-work of delicate tracery. The tawny leaves of the cut-leaved oak, which still hung quivering on the lower branches, were edged with its glittering fringe. The old rugged fir, the leafy beech, the tasselled birch, the bristly holly, the purple bramble, the crisp brown fern, the green grass of the park, all showed their own varied colours and varied forms through the same crystalline medium, contrasting with the rich hues of the holly-berries, the dark ivy-berry dear to the wood-pigeon, and the crimson haws, which the small birds love so well. In the stillness of that woodland scene, the rustle of a robin's wing, the dropping of a leaf from the bushes was distinctly audible.

Thanks to the companionship of Jacob Stokes, Katy knew every bird that visited the hill, or dwelt in the valley; the note, the habits, the nest, the eggs. It is even likely, that had some wicked enchanter imposed upon her the task of the poor princess in the fairy tale, who was commanded to select each bird's proper feathers from a heap that filled a room, she would have found the labour possible —a mere question of time—so extensive was her knowledge of those winged tribes, and so accurate her observation.

She pointed out to Honor that most beautiful of British birds, a gorgeous kingfisher, as he stooped to drink at a little rivulet—a tiny spring issuing from beneath the roots of a great beech, which went trickling along almost hidden by coat over coat of thin translucent ice, until it was lost in the winding stream, which, after traversing great part of the park, was

merged in its turn in the wide waters of the lake, now entirely frozen.

Katy's pockets were, as usual, filled with bread and biscuits, which she crumbled for her feathered clients; who, tamed by the severity of the season, were alternately attracted and repelled by their desire of sharing in her bounty, and their dread of Marigold, who, adorned in her new collar, and proud of it as a child of a necklace, gambolled round her young mistress playful and graceful as a fawn.

The frozen lake was a pretty sight, with its wooded islands, its mimic bays and promontories, the grand old forest trees between which it swept away into the distance, and the masses of evergreens, laurel, arbutus, cedar, cypress, or the light weeping-birch, or weeping-willow, of the foreground.

A beautiful sight always was Atherton mere, and on occasion of this wintry festival, it put forth signs of habitation such as

had not been seen there for many a long day.

On one of the points of land that jutted into the lake, hanging over the water, the lower part a boat-house, and above a rustic pavilion, stood an old grey fishing-house, half covered with ivy and creeping shrubs, backed by dark firs, and flanked on the farther side by two poplars of colossal growth and size, columns of vegetable beauty.

The smoke rose curling from the fishing house, prepared for good Mrs. Warner, in case of her feeling the cold too severe. She had, however, preferred a seat outside a tent in one of the sheltered bays; and as they approached, the young ladies saw at once that the travellers had arrived.

A large party of gentlemen were on the lower part of the lake, where a group of skaters and a number of country people had assembled. Lord Delancy with

his usual courtesy, having issued a general invitation to such of the neighbours as chose to join the sports upon the ice; the pavilion and marquee being filled with seats and refreshments for the gentry, and two or three tents in the background amply provided with ale and solid Christmas cheer for the villagers.

Katy, always shy, held back a little as they came near the lake. She dreaded a stranger. Honor insensibly drew her forward. Poor Honor! her veil was down; but the face was calmer than the heart. Mrs. Bell and an elegant woman of middle age advanced to meet them; and without suffering her mother to speak, Lady Cardonnel took Katy's hand.

"People talk of children growing out of knowledge," said she, "I have not seen those dimpled cheeks these six years, but I should have recognised them anywhere."

And bending graciously to the gover-

ness, she led the little heiress to a seat next her grandmother. Mrs. Warner, always considerate of the feelings of others, and therefore always well-bred, said:

"Will your ladyship permit me to present to you a very dear young friend of ours, whom I believe you to have seen abroad? Miss Clive, Lady Cardonnel."

"Miss Clive! Honora! Honor Clive! It is incredible! it is impossible! I heard of you, I saw you with the Lynmeres."

"And you find me in a far happier home," said Honor. "By-and-by I will tell you the story. At present your ladyship must play the hostess." And she joined Mrs. Glenham, who introduced her to the wife of a neighbouring clergyman, and talked as people do talk of the weather and the hoar frost, and the park, and the lake,—everything except that of which she was thinking.

At last Lady Cardonnel had disposed of her guests. Some walked into the pavilion; some more daring ventured on the ice. Mrs. Warner, wrapped in fur cloaks, remained in her old seat, talking over schools of industry with the good Rector, whose secret thoughts ever and anon wandered away to the Troades, and the matchless wailing of those Trojan women. Katy, escorted by Lord Delancy, and accompanied by her mother, tripped gaily on to join the skaters, occasionally tempted from her path by the less aristocratic amusement offered by a troop of sliders led by Jacob Stokes,—the very largest slide she had ever seen. Her mother held her tight lest the temptation might prove too strong for human weakness. And such perhaps it might have been, but for a counter-temptation held out by Lord Delancy, who not only promised her a lesson in skating, but had actually pro-

vided himself with a pair of such skates as are used by the country girls in Holland.

Lady Cardonnel had led her companion into a retired walk.

"Now then, Honor, why are you here? After that double loss, which all lamented, I heard of you with your aunt. I heard of you as on the point of marriage to Sir Philip Hervey."

"And you believed that report?"

"No. And I can understand why, refusing such a match as Sir Philip, a residence with the Lynmeres might become painful. But why not go to your uncle Rossborough? Why not come to me?"

"Dear Lady Cardonnel!"

"Why go out as a governess? Why come here?"

"Ah! that I fear was an error. To go as a governess was, I still believe, right and wise. The loss of that dear

father, that dear brother, who were everything to me, has left me destitute of means as well as withered in affection. Why should one absolutely penniless shrink from earning her bread by honest labour? And nowhere could I be more useful or more content than with these kind people. Here, however, I should not have come had I been aware of the chance of meeting any old acquaintance, even you, dear Lady Cardonnel. It seems strange to say, but I had never heard of Lord Delancy in connection with Atherton, nor of Atherton in connection with Lord Delancy, until I arrived at the gate of my new dwelling. If spoken of at all, it must have been as 'The Hall,' in contradistinction to 'The Castle.' The name of Delancy first met my ear as I was at the very door of my future residence. Then I endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Langhton to take me back again. I did not tell him all.

And since then I have tried to persuade Mrs. Warner to let me return to town, confessing frankly that I had received much kindness from you, and that my heart was not yet strong enough to meet one who had known me before I was an orphan."

"And they refused to part with you?"

"They would not hear of it. And after all, why should I go? What harm can result from my staying? Nobody knows better than you, that before Major Delancy's attentions to me had produced the natural effect of such attentions from such a man, I had become aware of my own position, and of his. Ah, dearest friend! how can I ever thank you enough for the frankness which saved me from causing the misery of such a son, and such a father! Causing and sharing! I knew that the small portion which I inherited from my mother was no longer mine, since

it was urgently needed by my poor brother and my dear father. I knew that Major Delancy was bound by every feeling of duty not to add to his family distress by marrying a portionless wife. I said, no, when he asked me—an absolute, unconditional, unexplained no. What man forgets, what man pardons such a refusal? And if from my previous conduct he had derived any encouragement, if he had guessed from look, or tone, or word, that his proposal would be only too pleasant to me, then a thousand times more will he resent that refusal, since he must attribute my previous manner to heartless coquetry. Since I have been here, I have gathered in a hundred ways from Mr. Langhton and these artless people, that the need of money at the Hall is more urgent than ever, and that a marriage is arranged between the young heiress and the heir. Look at her, and look at me. She is as

good as she is pretty, as charming as she is good. Besides, no man ever pardons such a refusal. He will but treat me as his father does, with cold civility. I will go to-night if you think it right. Be assured that I will do all I can to promote the match, for they are worthy of each other. But I know that no man ever pardons a refusal without an assigned cause, and I think that I shall promote it best by staying. Do what you will with me, dear Lady Cardonnel. I have told you all. Send me away at once if you see fit." And, paler than ever, Honor ceased. She had poured forth this confession of feeling with an emotion most unusual to her, and stood waiting the decision of her friend, who had listened to her with the deepest sympathy, when a sudden outburst from the lake of many voices—in which cries of distress from Katy, and calls between fright and scolding from Mrs. Bell, were

distinctly audible—put a sudden and unexpected stop to their dialogue.

They had purposely sought a retired footpath on the opposite side of the mere from that where the pavilion and the tents were situated, and which, although following the general outline of the water, was yet concealed from it partly by the irregularities of the ground, partly by clumps of cedars, and masses of arbutus and Portugal laurel, partly by brakes of hawthorn and holly, the natural growth of the soil.

If they had not been engrossed by the interest taken by both in the subject of their discourse, they might have discovered from the mingled hum of many voices, and the gay shouts of the country lads, that they were now nearly opposite that part of the lake which for thickness and smoothness had been selected by skaters, sliders, and spectators, as the principal scene of the morning's diversion.

Major Delancy, a splendid skater, after enjoying for a short space the exhilaration of an exercise in which he excelled, had with the utmost good humour left a party of the neighbouring gentlemen, who had crossed the downs for the purpose, and with whom he had been executing on the ice the different figures in which proficients delight, in order to give a lesson in the mystery of cutting initials and spread eagles on that glassy surface to Harry and Charles Glenham, and some other youths of their age, when he was summoned by his father to attend Katy and Mrs. Bell.

About the skating ground, as has been said, the ice was perfectly safe. But farther down the mere, the bank, overhung by a large weeping willow, jutted out abruptly, and, probably from a spring which fed the waters, the ice was so much thinner, that the spot had been staked out by tall sticks, surmounted by

little red flags in token of danger. The space that was perfectly safe was so extensive that there did not appear the slightest cause to apprehend that anybody would stray out of bounds.

Pets, however, are proverbially wilful. Marigold, after playing every conceivable prank around her mistress on dry ground —chasing the birds in the woodland, jumping after squirrels on the tree-tops, and trying to coax a dappled fawn into a game at romps—had followed her footsteps on the ice; and a little puzzled by the slippery smoothness, and daunted at the numbers assembled, had bounded forward until she reached the interdicted spot, the very point of danger, where the glassy surface, yielding even to her light weight, gave way more and more under her struggles; the ice sinking as the water rose, until at last the frightened favourite seemed to be totally immersed in the mere.

At this moment it was—whilst Katy was darting on to save her pet, and Mrs. Bell screaming to her to desist—that Lady Cardonnel and Honor found themselves on the edge of the lake, a little in advance of the mother and daughter, but still short of the scene of danger.

"Oh! Miss Clive, save my Katy!" shrieked Mrs. Bell. And Honor, first making a sign to Jacob Stokes, who was as usual close to his young mistress, bounded on the ice, and favoured by their mutual position, was able to seize her young pupil round the waist; thus checking her first impulse, and gaining time to exert the influence which she, and she only, possessed over that adventurous damsel, and to lead her gently towards her mother.

"Look, dearest; the danger is in the numbers who are hurrying to rescue your pretty darling. See! Harry is on firm

ice, and he has got hold of her now. Yes! he has hold of her collar; and Charles, with his arms round his brother's waist, is steadying Harry."

A rush of people came between, and the girls lost sight of the scene of danger. But a terrible cry announced that the ice had given way under one at least of the eager boys. Deadly peril was in every glimpse they caught, and in every sound they heard. Their senses reeled with the suspense and the fear, which seemed prolonging moments into hours.

Another rush gave them a view of Major Delancy on the bank, throwing, with all the power of his tall and vigorous frame, a long ladder across the space between the sound ice and the shore. In an instant he had drawn one brother from the dangerous pool, had lent a helping-hand to the other; and then, clinging to the long shoots of the willow, and making himself a desperate

plunge, he reappeared, bearing the unlucky cause of this commotion, the dripping, trembling Marigold, under his arm.

The whole scene passed in a shorter time than has been given to the narration.

"It was the ladder did it all, dear Dr. Glenham!" said he, as the agitated father vainly sought to thank him for saving one if not both his boys. "The ladder saved them, under Providence, not I; and the person who in the midst of this confusion directed me to this same ladder, and would have flung it himself if he had been strong enough, was this good little boy."

Jacob Stokes, not in general addicted to shyness, stole away from the good Doctor's gifts and praises, as if he had been caught in some misdeed, muttering as he turned over his money—for the Rector had emptied his purse into his hand—"that it was Miss who showed him the ladder, and he had no business to be thanked for her

doings, nor to take the guineas and half-crowns."

"My young friends will be the better for a glass of brandy, sir," said Major Delancy to his father; "and so will Dr. Glenham. I am an old campaigner, and know the virtues of cognac. In the meantime, I must take Marigold to Miss Warner."

"She would have been in the water, too," exclaimed Mrs. Bell, "if it had not been for her good governess, God bless her!"

And thus, after three years' absence, did Arthur Delancy meet Honor Clive. "Her governess!" He had almost dropt the shivering creature that he held. But Honor had augured justly. The pride of a refused man came to his assistance. He bowed slightly but respectfully, and recommended transporting the dripping grey hound to the fishing house, where she could be dried before the fire.

Honor, to whom Katy still clung, was at last able to escape to Mrs. Warner and Mrs. Glenham, each of whom had caught the sound of a vague alarm, a rumour of unexplained peril, and both were greatly solaced by receiving a clear and truthful account of the adventure. There was nothing now amiss except two wet jackets, which had better be changed.

Mrs. Glenham, eager to see her boys, and Mrs. Warner, desirous not to lose sight of her heedless granddaughter, were encountered at the entrance of the tent by the good Rector and Jacob, anxious to restore to the right owner the praises bestowed upon himself for discovering the ladder.

"'Twas Miss, there," quoth the boy; "she made a sign to me, and I told the Major."

Jacob lost nothing with any party by his honesty; and Mrs. Warner, now for

the first time hearing from the Doctor Honor's share in holding back Katy, said emphatically—

"I believe, my dear, that there is no good deed in which you have not a part."

If Honor had before doubted as to her line of conduct, this confidence would have decided her.

Nearly at the same moment, a still stronger revulsion took place in another young heart. Harry Glenham had been told by his father the suspicion which he himself entertained of Lord Delancy's desire to gain the hand of the heiress for his heir. He had been reminded that he was indebted to his kind patron not merely for a valuable living, but for a key of his magnificent library, the privilege perhaps dearest to him of any on earth; and for the thousand daily attentions and kindnesses which sweeten life between country neighbours. The father's appeal had been

felt by the high-spirited boy, but felt as we all feel words. What had happened that morning was a living act. As he thanked Major Delancy for the life which he owed to his bold heart and vigorous arm, and as the young soldier pressed his hand and declared that the joy was his, he inwardly vowed to go back to Cambridge, bury himself in his studies, and never suffer a thought of his pretty playfellow to cross his fancy again.

Is it needful to say that the mother's heart made the same renunciation?

CHAPTER X.

MUSIC BOOKS.

THE arrival of Lady Cardonnel tended much to facilitate the intercourse between the Hall and the Farm. The perfect breeding of the court lady, and the simplicity of Mrs. Warner, had so much in common, and, in either case, there was so great a fund of goodness and sincerity, that mutual respect and esteem grew up between them.

Lady Cardonnel, poor Lady Delancy's favourite sister, was a widow, whose children—the daughters married, and the sons

in the naval, military, and diplomatic service of their country—were literally scattered all over the face of the earth, so that her brother-in-law's house was more her home than any other abode, and his interests as much her own as if they had been united by the ties of blood. She had spent the three years of the occupation of France with her youngest daughter, the wife of an officer in Arthur's regiment, and there she had become sincerely attached to her high-minded nephew, and hardly less so to Honor Clive; and it was because she loved both so well, that she joined Stephen Langhton in his endeavours to bring about the union with Katy, foreseeing nothing but misery on either side, in the renewal of an affection which would bring ruin to his worldly prospects, and break his father's heart. Her advice to her young friend had been to remain at Atherton, the rather that Major Delancy's manner to her

was as cold as was consistent with gentlemanly courtesy. If not indifference, it was a resentment so chilling and so persevering as to answer the same purpose.

The good lawyer also was frequently at the Hall, and upon these occasions the two families were brought into still closer connexion. Sometimes they walked together; sometimes they drove, and then good Mrs. Warner was seduced into joining the party: still more frequently the younger ladies rode on horseback. Major Delancy had redeemed Mrs. Bell's promise, by causing a beautiful mare to be trained under his own inspection for her daughter's use. His groom had been seen, equipped with riding-skirt and side-saddle, cantering across the park at so wild a rate, that Jacob Stokes, not suspecting the disguise, paid his young mistress the equivocal compliment of declaring that it could be nobody but Miss Katy. The creature had

become so great a favourite, that the "Faëry Queen" had been ransacked to find a name to match her grace and symmetry; and as if conscious of the affection lavished upon her, Britomarte seemed never so happy as when cantering with her fair rider over the downs every day and all day long.

Of course the gentlemen attended at these morning rides, and very often the party at the Farm were invited to an unceremonious dinner. In return, the small family at the Hall would drink tea with their humbler neighbours. No influence short of Honor's could have restrained Mrs. Bell's desire to extend to them a far larger portion of hospitality. One day she beheld her turning over the leaves of an ancient-looking cookery book, meditating eggs and bacon in blancmange, and a floating island in whipt cream, besides a dozen other rustic luxuries culled from a family collection of choice recipes, and the

slaughter of a hecatomb of poultry, from Katy's pigeons up to the last turkey of the season. Lucky birds! that talk between Miss Clive and Mrs. Bell saved their lives.

It was now, to date as Katy did by flowers, about the time when snowdrops, hepaticas, crocuses, and the winter-aconite, were circling round the old sun-dial in the garden, primroses covering the sunny banks, violets perfuming the hedgerows, and daffodils crowding round the orchard trees; and the usual party were assembled in the pleasant parlour at the Farm, fragrant with the violets which she had stolen from the park, when Mr. Langhton addressed Katy with a question which seemed innocent enough, but which would have startled a more experienced young lady, as the forerunner of a very unwelcome request.

"Pray, my queen, did you ever get the

remainder of the 'Good-morrow' song from your Atherton poet?—the idle member of an idle fraternity, as his brother Charles very justly called him."

Katy stood up womanfully for her poor friend; and Arthur, who had taken a fancy to the lad from the moment he had pulled him out of the water, as indeed he had done by Marigold (a generous spirit does love those whom it has served), made common cause in his defence.

Lord Delancy, pleased with everything that tended to bring into closer familiarity the couple whom he so ardently wished to unite, joined in the conversation caused by Mr. Langhton's question, and expressed a desire to hear the song.

"No," replied Katy, "the song was never finished." And then she repeated the stanza.

"Sing it," said her guardian.

But Katy blushed and laughed, and looked "No," although she did not speak it;

she looked, too, as if determined, for once in her life, to be obstinate.

"Sing it, and Miss Clive will accompany you," said her grandmother, as Honor took her seat at the instrument.

"Sing it, and Miss Clive will help you," said Mrs. Bell. "Sing it, or we shan't love you."

"Won't you!" said Katy's loving, saucy glance, as plainly as ever eye spoke yet.

"Sing it, my Katy, if you love me," whispered Honor.

Katy, unable to resist that adjuration, began; but before she got through the "Good-morrow," stopped suddenly. Honor, accustomed to her fits of fright, continued the accompaniment for a few bars, and then said to Mr. Langhton—

"That burthen seems to have taken hold of Mr. Henry's imagination; for on inquiring of Mrs. Glenham if she could furnish us with the remainder of the 'Good-morrow' song, she produced another, which I

have copied into this book. Suppose we try that, Katy? I think Mr. Langhton will like the air." And not giving her time to become frightened, she launched her dexterously into the song.

Give thee good-morrow, busy bee!
No cloud is in the sky,
The ring-dove skims across the lea,
The matin lark soars high;
Gay sunbeams kiss the dewy flower,
Light breezes stir the tree,
And sweet is thine own woodbine bower,—
Good-morrow, busy bee!

Give thee good-even, busy bee!
The summer day is by,
Now droning beetles haunt the lea,
And shrieking plovers cry.
The light hath paled on leaf and flower,
The night-wind chills the tree,
And thou, well-laden, leav'st thy bower,—
Good-even, busy bee!

The Hall party, to whom Katy's singing was a surprise, were enraptured with the

young, fresh voice, and the perfect articulation.

"Is it not as if we were transported to Isaac Walton's times, and were sitting in the meadows by the river Lea, listening to one of the milkmaids?" inquired the old lawyer of Lord Delancy.

Like a commentary upon the observation, Honor began playing the symphony of Haydn's beautiful canzonet "My mother bids me bind my hair," which, although not called so, is as fully a pastoral as Isaac Walton's book.

"Can you sing any duets, Miss Warner? I am sure you can. Arthur, come here and sing with Miss Warner."

Arthur had been sitting in the darkest corner of the room, his elbow on a table, and his head leaning on his hand, as if absorbed by the music.

Honor opened another book at the "Canzonets of Jackson of Exeter," and

placed "Love, in thine eyes" open before her.

Again Lord Delancy summoned his son; and this time he obeyed, going through his task with the skill and taste of a perfect musician. Katy was again slightly nervous; but Honor, to use Mrs. Bell's phrase, "helped her," supplying a momentary deficiency and concealing a little flaw, much as a professed singing mistress might have done, if ever singing mistress had had so true an interest in her pupil.

Lady Cardonnel, also summoned to help in "O Nannie," and other charming part songs, leaned over Honor and whispered:

"Will not you sing?"

"I have never sung, except, as now, a few notes to aid, or an entire air by way of lesson, since I lost him with whom we used to sing at Valenciennes."

"Ay," said Lady Cardonnel, "this is the old book;" and hanging over Colonel

Delancy's shoulder, she turned over the leaves and read the titles, "Time has not thinned;" "Take, oh take those lips away;" "Do not unbind two gentle hearts;" whilst another voice murmured "Poor Lionel!"

Many weeks had not passed before Katy added some of Mozart's finest duets to her stock: "La ci darem," "Ah perdona," "Ah guarda sorella," and "Ti veggo," from Winter's "Rape of Proserpine." It is doubtful whether the delightful expression of her English songs, admirable in articulation and feeling, or the imperfection of her fresh-caught Italian, were most attractive. But a deeper charm than either was to be found in the sympathy for her friend with which she avoided speaking on any subject connected with former performances of this music. She had heard from Lady Cardonnel that Captain Clive, the brother whom Honor loved

so well, had been accustomed to sing with her. She recognised the sort of family likeness which often distinguishes handwriting in some manuscript German songs. Other MSS. there were also. But Katy had learnt to read the sensibility under the self-command of her governess's character, and avoided all trying subjects with the tact which is born of the heart.

CHAPTER XI.

SKETCH BOOKS.

"LET us take another turn under the lime-trees," said Katy to her governess one Sunday afternoon returning from church, when they had reached the end of the fine avenue where the sunbeams played through the half opening leaves, casting a chequered light on the broad gravel road; for by this time cowslips and fritillaries threw their bright colours on the grass. "Do not let us go in just yet. Mamma will take grandmamma home, and we will follow after one more turn."

Mrs. Warner had been leaning on Honor's arm, and Katy was following side by side with her mother when she made this proposal.

"With all my heart," said Mrs. Bell; "I cannot have a worse companion than you, Katy, for you have not spoken a word. What have you been thinking about?"

"Nothing, mamma," responded the little beauty, as the four ladies parted, according to her arrangement: "Nothing at all."

Now this answer, which is in the very spirit of young ladyism, the answer which every girl of sixteen returns by instinct to that question when conscious that she has been thinking of any object a little too much, was entirely out of Katy's way; that fair damsel being one who, partly from the indulgence of those about her, partly from natural frankness, had never

known the weight of a secret in her life. Accordingly, those two simple words, "Nothing, mamma," made a strong impression upon one at least of her hearers.

Honor, however, knew that in these cases the best way to get at the truth is not always to ask for it. So she waited; and after they had walked a short distance arm in arm, a sudden question offered some hint as to the subject of her pupil's meditations.

"Do you think Major Delancy handsome?" said she.

The answer was such as to encourage a farther confidence.

"Certainly. I believe that every one thinks him so."

"I never did till to-day," resumed Katy, with her old frankness. "Though, to be sure, I have always been too much afraid of him to stare him in the face. But this afternoon as he sat in the corner

of that great chancel pew, with his head thrown back, and his eyes cast down, the light as it streamed through the tall window falling right upon his temple, and the curls pushed away from his high forehead, I thought that he looked very noble; calm and kind as a soldier ought to look."

"As a soldier ought to be," observed Honor, "and as I believe he is. Nothing can be higher than his character in the regiment. He is beloved by officers and men."

"Don't you think," continued Katy, "that he is like one of the heads in your Vasari, those grand old heads of the sculptors and painters, which are to a certain extent alike?"

"Perhaps so. We will look them over when we get home."

"Though, why they should be like a soldier—"

"Except," interrupted Honor, "that they were soldiers of a nobler army—art that creates, not war that destroys. And I that say this am a soldier's daughter," added she, smiling; "but it is the truth, or that which I believe to be so."

Just then the object of their praise, his father, and Lady Cardonnel were seen coming up the avenue, with Dr. and Mrs. Glenham, for whom they had waited. Katy's shyness returned at the sight, and but for Honor's better judgment, she would certainly have run away home. On meeting the party, Lord Delancy took immediate possession of the young heiress, and offering her his arm, insisted on her accompanying them to the Hall.

"We are old-fashioned people," said he, "and dine at luncheon time on Sundays; and Dr. and Mrs. Glenham have had the goodness to return with us to coffee. I am to show her some fine German and Italian

prints. They are mostly on Scripture subjects, and would please Mrs. Warner. Don't you think that if Arthur should drive the pony-chaise to the farm, he might prevail on her and Mrs. Bell to join us? At all events, I shall detain you as a hostage."

And overcoming her feeble show of opposition, he conducted her to the mansion.

Major Delancy speedily returned from his expedition, only half successful. The good grandmamma was fatigued; but Mrs. Bell, never more completely at ease than with the young soldier, who struck such awe into her daughter, entered the drawing-room in the highest spirits.

"I tell you, Major, that men are all alike," exclaimed she, finishing a dispute which had lasted the whole way. "I have had two husbands, and am a woman of experience; and I maintain that grave

or gay, rough or smooth, talkative or silent, they have all the same fault, they will have their own way. There was my first husband, Katy's father, who was so gentle and so quiet, I did not think he could have spoken two words at a time. Well! he had a way of his own, I promise you. And then there was my second spouse, such a giddy whirligig, that I did not believe he would ever stay long enough in a place to make up his mind to anything. Well! he too had a way of his own, and he would have it. Men are all alike, young ladies, —all alike, the very best of them."

"Poor Mrs. Bell!" said Lord Delancy.

"Poor papa!" cried Katy.

After coffee they repaired to the print room, where a splendid collection of the finest and rarest engravings in the world, were ranged upon double desks, round the spacious apartment. Mr. Dillon has since shown what money and taste can do

when they meet in an English merchant. What an art it is that diffuses beauty as well as thought, giving to these representatives of great pictures a home in every land, and a chance of duration infinitely multiplied! That colourless and silent poetry, how it appeals to the heart!—the great painters with their fiery etchings! and they who, slow and patient masters of their own high art, almost equalled on the copper the masterpiece they copied!

Lord Delancy, chiefly devoting himself to Mrs. Glenham, left the other ladies to the care of his son; for the dear Doctor had fallen upon Flaxman's Homer, and had forgotten that any woman had been born since the Siege of Troy.

Lady Cardonnel took charge of her younger visitors, ministering with almost equal delight to the cultivated taste of one fair companion, and the uncultivated intelligence of the other, full of the

eager questions which it is so pleasant to answer.

Major Delancy, for his share, undertook to amuse Mrs. Bell, who, it is sad to say, yawned over the fine Marc-Antonios, the huge Rembrandts, and the tiny Waterloos, and set all the efforts of her cavalier at nought, until he bethought him of a certain English magician, called Hogarth, powerful in cases of ennui, and brought forward a complete set of the great humourist, valuable for every sort of quality, rarity, condition, and former possessors (for many of these single impressions had a pedigree), as well as for the satire and the invention which have made the painter immortal.

Mrs. Bell was charmed. She had the English feeling of character, and that happened to her which has befallen many another gazer at those prints. She knew the baker's boy, whose tray is overset, and

had been well acquainted with the old maid going to church on a frosty morning.

Mrs. Bell went on merrily giving names to Hogarth's figures, until the costume or the attitude of the principal character in "Strolling Players dressing in a barn," awakened another English feeling, called decorum.

"Fie, fie, Major!" exclaimed the irate dame, "look at the shameless hussy tying up her garter before everybody: fie, fie!"

"Dear Mrs. Bell, it's only to show the hole in her stocking," observed the Major, in a deprecating tone. "Poor wretches, it's just to set forth the mixture of finery and penury. Look at the tin crown, and——"

"I'll look at nothing," declared Mrs. Bell, shutting the portfolio with a slam of virtuous indignation. "Suppose Katy should come."

Roused by the slam of the portfolio, which resounded through the room, and

by the clamour of her mother's voice, Katy did arrive, followed with more or less dispatch by the entire company. The Major had contrived to suppress all symptoms of a smile round his mouth, but there was a glimmer of laughter in his eyes which showed that the outcry had not proceeded from any very serious cause. He left Mrs. Bell to tell her own story; and instead of returning to the grievance, which would probably have ended in the production of the delinquent figure, she reminded Lord Delancy that he had promised Katy a sight of the Major's sketch-books.

Katy enforced the demand.

"I had not forgotten my promise," said Lord Delancy. "I made my son bring them to me only yesterday. They are in the library now." And sending a servant for four or five volumes of clasped books, he laid them before Lady Cardonnel.

Two or three volumes of very beautiful landscape drawings, chiefly of lake and mountain scenery, with here the ruin of a temple, there of an aqueduct; here an Italian villa, there a Roman bridge: such scenes as may be found in the Liber Veritatis, the magazine in which Claude secured those treasures of grace and beauty which he afterwards transferred to his grand compositions. Two or three volumes of this character were readily displayed, with no further deprecation than that of an amateur who knows perfectly the limits of his power.

"They are merely reminiscences of scenery," said he, "done for my own gratification; as part, indeed, of a military and travelling diary; and without any pretension to artistic merit."

Under one or two the names of the places were written, and Katy exclaimed as, in soliloquy:

"That's the same handwriting with the Spanish songs in Honor's music-book."

Major Delancy was relating to Mrs. Bell some anecdote connected with the scene, and did not hear her observation.

Having gone through all but one of the sketch-books, he was about to put aside that which remained, unexamined, when the clasp unclosed, and Katy broke into raptures at the sight of the fine old Flemish town which it exhibited.

"This is worth all the rest," cried she. "Look at those curious tall houses, with the narrow-peaked gables, which seem set sideways to the street; the strange doorways, the pretty windows, the twisted chimneys, the odd figures on the spouts, the stone galleries here and there, the carved balconies everywhere;—only look! Then the spirit and the truth; the people on the causeway; we can see them! The sunshine and the shadow; they are really

to be felt. Look, Honor: this is worth all the rest."

But Honor had drawn back her chair.

"Lady Cardonnel," said Arthur, in a low voice, "shut that book. It never ought to have been opened."

"Not on my account, Lady Cardonnel," said Honor. "Shew Katy the old Belgian towns. The first sight of those drawings reminded me of the days when they were taken—days when I was rich in a dear father and a dear brother. But what is our whole life if not a memory of past happiness? And should not the gifts and virtues of those loved and lost be cherished as a blessing, not turned from as a curse? Show Katy the towns."

She passed through an open French window, and sate in the shadow of the colonnade, looking over the park.

"Major Delancy knew Miss Clive, then?" whispered Katy.

"Yes; she was with her father and brother when they were quartered at Valenciennes, where Arthur's regiment was also stationed. It was there that I made her acquaintance. Captain Clive and my nephew were most intimate, as you may guess from their having made sketching excursions together, and often worked upon the same drawing."

"Poor Honor," sighed Katy.

"Yes, she loved her brother dearly; he was indeed a most gifted creature. She has since lost both him and her father."

"Dear Honor!"

"Lady Cardonnel then directed her companion's attention to some highly graphic representations of Flemish and German towns: Ghent, Antwerp, Bruges, Nuremburg, in which the spirited and brilliant pencilling caught the young girl's fancy more than the poetical feeling displayed by the owner of the book in

lake and mountain scenery, where the treatment of atmospheric effects, the clouds, the waterfalls, the distant hills, was often masterly.

At last, in a sketch by Major Delancy of one of the Moorish cities of Spain, Seville or Granada, a loose card, wrapped in silver paper, provoked Katy's curiosity. It was a profile of a young English officer, the pure outline of whose features was too familiar to her to be mistaken. The initials L. C. were written underneath.

"Lionel Clive," exclaimed Lady Cardonnel a moment after.

"How like Honor!" burst from the two; for Mrs. Bell had long forsaken the books she had demanded, and was sitting in peaceful slumber on a distant sofa; and from the moment that Lionel's drawings had been exhibited, Arthur had held aloof.

As they were replacing the card, they saw another profile, slightly touched on the reverse, a female head, with the hair braided as in the Greek statues.

"Honor herself!" cried Katy. "I wonder if she knows it."

Meanwhile, the peaceful hour and the peaceful scene aided in restoring the poor governess to tranquillity. The rich perfume of plants from the conservatories blended with the thousand natural sweetnesses of spring in the woods. Nightingales answered each other from brake to thicket, and mixed with the soothing fall of a fountain, whose jets were silvered by the moonbeams. Light and shadow seemed softened in the park. All was harmony, till a stern voice spoke at the window, apparently in answer to some kind remark of Lady Cardonnel.

"Do not tell me of tears, Margaret!

They are oftener shed for the living than the dead."

This was a defiance to good or to evil, and so it was felt by Honora. This time no tears fell.

CHAPTER XII.

A YOUNG LADY'S BOOK-SHELVES.

THREE or four days after this scene, Mr. Langhton presented himself at an early hour in Major Delancy's dressing-room. He had arrived by a night coach at the nearest town, and had driven to the Hall in all haste.

"Arthur," said he, dismissing the valet, "this affair must be brought at once to a conclusion. I have not thought fit to speak on the subject to your father, because I know as well as you the danger to his health of all transitions of hope and

fear. But I tell you plainly that dangers are looming in the distance. The adverse solicitors throw out hints, which of course we are not the last to hear. Sir Vivian, I know, is hanging about this neighbourhood, hatching mischief, according to his nature. Think, if your father should catch sight of him before this marriage is finally arranged, what might be the consequence. I, as you know, do not hold myself justified, as executor or as guardian, to advance so immense a sum until at least the settlements are signed. In short, the formal proposal must be made at once. I do not see any danger of refusal. The mother and grandmother are strongly with you; and the young lady certainly likes no man better, unless it be your father. Follow her in her afternoon walk, and find or make an opportunity. I shall back to my proper work of drawing deeds; and a snap of the fingers," continued he,

suiting the action to the word, "for Sir Vivian and his devilries!"

So departing, without leaving time for reply, the good lawyer drove briskly to the Farm.

Thither, a few hours after, we follow him.

Now dearest Mrs. Bell, whose genial and hearty character had borne so well the broad sunshine of prosperity, rejoicing in Katy's good fortune, and trying to make all around her as happy as herself—that dear and excellent Mrs. Bell had her little foibles, as all women ought to have. It is only Queen Elizabeth who, in the plenitude of her royal grandeur and her unroyal vanity, desired to be painted without shadow. Our Mrs. Bell was no Queen Elizabeth; and the shade that threw into relief the broad lights of her honest countenance, was the least spice, the smallest spice in the world, of mistrust of her neighbours. She did not hate

them; she did not speak ill of them; but she was a little addicted to suspecting them of hating and speaking ill of her: in short, she had always a Mrs. Grundy. At the commencement of our story, Mrs. Glenham had filled that ungracious part; but matters having righted in that quarter, especially since the accident on the ice, the reigning Mrs. Grundy was no other than her old gossip and crony, Mrs. Thorpe, wife of the miller, whose bell-team had been eclipsed by the famous horses purchased by Katy's orders, who now drew Mrs. Bell's waggon to the next market town, as proudly as if it had been a dray of Barclay and Perkins, or the Lord Mayor's coach. It is just possible that the bell-team in question, whose paraphernalia had never been equalled in Atherton, might have inflicted certain pangs of jealousy on Mrs. Thorpe, and that the ill-will was not wholly on one

side—which, speaking from a pretty long experience, it may be assumed that ill-will seldom is.

Peace and harmony reigned in the pleasant morning room. Mrs. Warner, with her Bible before her, and her knitting on her lap; Mr. Langhton writing a letter, which, from his deep attention, seemed important; and Katy, at her own desire, attempting, under Honor's patient direction, a simple accompaniment to one of her own songs. All on a sudden, a storm entered from the village, in the person of Mrs. Bell, red-hot with anger.

"Well!" quoth she, "what will that woman say next?"

"What woman, dear Mrs. Bell?"

"What woman, mamma?" inquired the young ladies, almost simultaneously.

"Mrs. Thorpe!" was the reply. "She calls us all the bad names that ever were heard of—bad names out of the Bible! —wicked that she is!"

"All owing to those horses of yours, Katy," said Stephen, looking up from his letter. "Now you've beaten her husband's team so thoroughly, Mrs. Bell, you can afford to be generous, and let her jingle the bells."

"She calls us bad names out of the Bible!" repeated the angry lady; "and says that I am as proud as Jezebel, and shall come to the same end. And she says bad things of you, Sir: she says, that not content with calling Katy a queen (and I'm sure you've called her so these dozen years) you are setting her up like one, and have got an Earl's daughter for her governess. And then she talks nonsense out of a play-book, and tells of some old wicked wretch who set up his daughter in the same way, with a decayed gentlewoman for her serving-maid. To think of telling untruths of dear Miss Clive! She might say what she liked of me; but to speak falsehoods of her, and call her a serving-maid and an earl's daughter!"

"Any one who spoke ill of Miss Clive must tell an untruth," observed Mrs. Warner, perceiving that Mr. Langhton looked perplexed, and that Honor, with an expression between a blush and a smile, seemed hesitating what to say.

"Honor!" said Katy, flinging her arms round her friend's neck, "Dear Honor! can this be true?"

"Not wholly true," was the reply, "nor yet altogether false. I am not an Earl's daughter, Katy. But would you love me less if my mother had been such? I never meant to deceive you, dearest Mrs. Warner. When Mr. Langhton enquired for a governess of my friend and school-fellow, Mrs. Osborne, she told him that I was in want of such a situation. My poor mother, dead long ago, had been the youngest of many children. My father, a younger brother of good family, was a colonel in the army. When he too died, I remained penniless."

"Add," broke in Stephen, "that she had given up her mother's portion that her father might purchase a company for her brother, and pay certain unavoidable debts and losses."

Honor pressed his hands.

"Lady Lucy Lynmere, my mother's half-sister, took me to live with her; but there I could not stay."

"Because she refused a booby and a dolt," again interrupted Mr. Langhton.

"And then I came here," said Honor; "where I have found dear friends and a happy home. Indeed I did not mean to deceive you, Mrs. Warner. Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Bell, I never dreamt of concealment. Katy, you will not love me less, my Katy, for this accident of birth? I do not love you less for being rich."

Mrs. Bell was on the point of giving vent to a whole volume of flourishing apologies about the tent-bed and the

painted wash-hand stand; but a kiss from Honor drove away all her fine speeches; and with a genuine exclamation:

"We could not have loved you better if you had been a princess!" she flung herself upon her neck and wept aloud.

"Nor could we have respected you more had we known all the noble things that Mr. Langhton has told us of you," said Mrs. Warner.

"Though how he came to know them," began Honor.

"Unless Mrs. Osborne told me," interposed the lawyer, "you cannot guess. But, indeed," added he, "I have myself the pleasure of some acquaintance with your rejected swain, an accomplished person, who, having a filly to enter for the Oaks, spelt her name of Psyche without the P. Some add that by way of making the rejected letter amends for the omission, he inserted it where it saw itself for the

first time in the word filly, which according to his reading stands so—Philly. But for my part, being of a charitable disposition, I, like Sir Benjamin Backbite when talking of Miss Letitia Piper's Twins, never believe more than half of these stories."

"I wonder," said Mrs. Warner, "how Mrs. Thorpe heard her news."

"Oh, the country!" said Stephen, "the country accounts for the spread of all news, false or true. As there are certain districts to which typhus seems indigenous, so gossip springs up spontaneously in the country, it is indeed its natural produce. This country of yours—this innocent country!" muttered the old lawyer, quoting, as he often did, a poignant figment of Horace Walpole: "'Questions grow there, and the Christian commodity, neighbours.' In London we don't know who lives next door. You may be dead

and buried and nobody know or care;—a precious privilege. Now that we are talking of your grandmother, Honor, tell me if you have a portrait of her? and if it be here? Lady Rossborough was one of those traditionary beauties whose loveliness lives in the ears of men, like that of Cleopatra, or Mary Queen of Scots, or Lady Coventry."

"Ah!" exclaimed Katy, "can it be that enchanting little print of a lady in a black hat and feathers, which Major Delancy was looking at the other night? the little engraving which lies between the leaves of one of the music books?"

"Where my poor brother placed it just before his fatal illness," said Honor. "Yes."

"I will show it to you," said Katy. "Don't disturb it, dear Mr. Langhton," added she, in a low voice, "I think Honor does not wish it touched. I'll hold it for mamma and grandmamma."

"I have a miniature up-stairs which gives a better idea of her beauty," said Honor.

"It is hardly possible to go beyond this," said Mrs. Warner. This is sweetness itself."

Perhaps sweetness was the best word for that loveliest face. The rose almost emitted its fragrance. Charles Fox has described in his lines to Mrs. Crewe—an English beauty of whom the Irish countess was nearly the contemporary—that surpassing charm, of which the essence is character. The lines are not poetry, according to our present notion; but they have the merit of making us see the object described, instead of stopping to admire the description:—

"Where the sweetest expression to features is joined,
By Nature's most delicate pencil designed;
Where blushes unbidden, and smiles without art,
Speak the softness and feeling that dwell in the heart;
Where in manners enchanting no blemish we trace
But the soul keeps the promise we had from the face."

Such was the impression produced by Reynolds's pencil, and Bartolozzi's graver, in the portrait of the Countess of Rossborough.

Still Mr. Langhton wished to see the miniature. And the whole party, except Mrs. Warner, followed Honor to the small room over the door which Mrs. Bell had assigned to her as a study.

Katy flung her arms round her friend's waist, as they lightly ascended the stairs, and whispered:

"Did not Major Delancy know Captain Clive?"

"Yes," was the reply, "they were comrades and friends."

"And your father knew him?"

"Yes."

"And he knew you?"

"Yes, dear Katy. Here we shall find the miniature, Mr. Langhton. Yes, here it is."

"Ah! how lovely!" burst from all when they saw those features, with the full magic of colour, sparkling with smiles and blushes as in life.

"And here is her little prayer-book," said Honor; "and a few letters to my poor mother."

"Let me look at them," interposed Mr. Langhton; "I take an interest in every thing belonging to a beauty."

"They are as sweet as her countenance," said Honor. "Ah, and here is some old point-lace, the lace of which we were talking the other evening."

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mrs. Bell, giving vent as usual to the unsophisticated impression. "How ugly! and what a colour! I beg your pardon, though," added she, upon reflection, "I dare say it's all my fault, and that the lace is really very handsome."

Honor smiled, as smile she needs must.

"Dearest Mrs. Bell, your truthfulness is worth all the fine-lady taste in the world. I am afraid that, except for the sake of those to whom it once belonged, I care for the point-lace as little as you do. There are my books," added she, addressing the old gentleman, who was still busy with the letters of the lovely Countess. "You can look over those at your leisure."

Mrs. Bell had presented Honor with an old fashioned, very black-looking, little book-case, which she called a scrutoire; a combination of desk and shelves, glass doors above, and three shallow drawers, with large brass handles, below. Originally this piece of furniture had decorated the best parlour; the shelves having been filled by a collection of stuffed birds of all nations, considerably the worse for wear. Cockatoos were there, and paroquets, and humming-birds no bigger than cock-

chafers, reliques bequeathed to some former generation by a long-deceased sailor-uncle; and ring-ouzels, white blackbirds, and other curiosities of the same sort, stuffed by a traditionary aunt Martha, who had cultivated that singular female accomplishment.

Mrs. Bell had sighed over the dingy and moth-eaten remains, as she put them into a corner of the lumber room; whilst Katy and Jacob, learned as they were in such lore, had pored over them as Cuvier over a new set of fossil bones, guessing at name and species as a child at a riddle. An old warped mummy of a horned owl had completely posed them. They took the unlucky bird for a cat; and but for the beak which dropped off in the transit, for a cat it would have passed to this hour.

Katy had been the chief agent in installing the new tenants, the books; giving her assistance with the most willing

activity in unpacking, sorting, dusting, and arranging the several sets. She now pointed them out to Mr. Langhton, who, pocketing the Countess's packet, ran his fingers along the glass as he read the titles; accompanying the action by a half-muttered commentary, delivered rather as a soliloquy, than as a reply to Honor's apologetic.

"Very few, and rather miscellaneous than select!"

"Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton,—aye, the prose too; that's right!—Dryden, Pope, Cowley, poems and essays,—right there too! Bacon's Essays, Evelyn, Pepys, Walton's Lives, Lettres Spirituelles, Pascal, Holy Living and Dying, Foster's Essays—the girl's a good girl! Don Quixote—have you read that, my queen?"

"No, sir; and I wish so much to read it. Will you lend it to me, dear Honor?"

Honor's answer was to take out the volumes, write Katy's name in the first page, and give her the work with a tender kiss.

Mr. Langhton went on with his catalogue:

"Gentle Shepherd, Howell's Letters, Gandentio di Lucca—curious old book that of Bishop Berkeley's! she's getting into my line!—Burns; aye, Currie's edition. Wonderful creature!—I saw him once. Eye like an hawk! What are all these? Old ballads? Yes; Percy, Scott, Ritson, Ellis, Thomas Warton, André Chenier —don't know him! Lamb's Specimens; good! Ariosto, Alfieri, Molière, Madame de Sevigné, Defoe's Plague of London, Vasari, Crabbe, Cowper—my journey, to wit—Vicar of Wakefield, Franklin's Sophocles. Did not I see the Greek Antigone upon his table to-day? De Grammont, Sully, Drinkwater's Gibraltar—

those would be her brother's books. Miscellaneous and imperfect as it is, this is the collection of a woman of a ripe mind, worth all the beauty in the world!"

Ever since the episode of Don Quixote, the good lawyer had been literally talking, or rather muttering to himself; Katy having drawn Honor away, that they might look together over the plates in her beautiful book, for it was that edition which contains the exquisite "Dorothea" of Stothard; so our friend turned from the old scrutoire, and walked down stairs, in that which is commonly called a brown study, and instead of despatching the letter which he had been writing, took himself off to London the same afternoon.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COPPICE.

THAT afternoon was indeed most lovely. Small fleecy clouds went sailing over the bright blue sky, casting here and there a shadow over a landscape almost too bright in the full sunshine. The leaves—some, as the elm and the beech, just bursting from their brown sheaths; some, like the birch, waving in tenderest verdure; some, as the oak, sealed up in the dim buds—formed a variety enchanting to look upon. Even where the boughs were bare, they were alive with sap mounting into the highest

branches, transparent, glowing, full of purple light.

The orchard of the Farm was one flush of blossom, every fruit tree garlanded from the bottom to the top; whilst over many a cottage, and at the edge of many a wood, some noble old pear or wild cherry tossed its white flowers in the sun. Up the downs, too, came rich glimpses of the golden furze blossom, thickets of heavy almond odour, left here and there to shelter the young lambs.

The park revelled in gorgeous beauty; its noble mansion; its masses of evergreens, cypress, cedar, bay, and pine; its bright waters, giving back the weeping-willow, the drooping birch, and the huge Spanish chesnut; the long lines of American borders near the house already putting forth their gay colours; the broad avenue of limes; the spiral poplars; and farther on, the grand old forest trees—oak,

beech, and elm, with their undergrowth of hawthorn, holly, and fern; that fern on which, under the tufted May garlands, does and fawns lay sleeping in the sun. The earth, too, was full of fragrance and of beauty. Everywhere the grass had the deep verdure of England, now powdered with daisies, now golden with buttercups, now enamelled with the purple bells of the wild hyacinth.

Through this scene of sylvan loveliness, Katy, with her faithful attendants, Jacob and Marigold, sallied forth to gather the first lilies for the Great Farm. Her guardian had reminded her that she had promised to fill his jar with that pure and graceful nosegay, composed of some score or two of delicate stalks, hung with their snowy bells, and backed-up with the broad silky leaf, of which the texture is as elegant as the hue. Honor should have helped to gather them; but Honor, although

she would never confess to being tired, often looked pale after one of their long walks; and this afternoon, without walking, she looked paler than ever. So Mrs. Warner prevailed upon her to stay at home.

Their way lay across a corner of the park, to a coppice which ascended in terraces to the high table-land which overhung the village. The coppice consisted almost wholly of hazel, with its fragrant tassels, interspersed with mountain-ash, now covered with its broad blossoms, and oaks of some eighty years' growth. The ground was literally carpeted with flowers, wood-sorrel, wood-anemone, wood-veitch, wood-roof, Solomon's-seal, columbine, wild strawberry, that strange and spectral flower, the wild Star of Bethlehem, cloudberries and lilies, in beds of half an acre, scenting the air.

The path, a steep and winding ascent,

led from terrace to terrace, often undermined by fox's earths, holes filled up with dead leaves and living flowers, and looked upon nothing but the broad tree-tops. The solitude was unbroken. Numberless nightingales, as conscious of the silence, seemed answering each other in that exquisite variety of song so delicious when unprofaned by meaner notes.

The three companions had found in that pleasant place, and on that lovely May evening, a congenial occupation.

Jacob, plunged into one of the shallow pits spoken of above, was driving a long pole as far as it would go into a hole in the side, uncertain whether it did or not contain a litter of rabbits. "If that lazy jade Flora," thought Jacob, "would but have dragged her fat body this distance, her tongue would soon have told the truth of the matter. No rabbit could cheat her. Into the hole would she have rushed,

scratching and questing. We should have tracked her under the ground as old Sam Pownall tracks the moles. To be sure, the last time she got into a burrow she stuck fast, and we had to fetch a matter of six men to dig her out. It cost a good crown-piece in beer at the Delancy Arms, which angered Madam Bell. And Miss Katy got frightened for fear she should be smothered. So, may be 'tis better she's at home." And Jacob, a philosopher in his way, pursued his researches unassisted.

Marigold's diversion was of a different sort. She had discovered and made prize of a hedgehog, which, coiling itself into a ball, exercised a kind of passive resistance, which bade fair to defeat the manœuvres of its swift and powerful enemy. Marigold was puzzled. Now she gave it a poke with her pretty black nose, receiving so sharp a prick on that sensitive part that she tossed her slender head in the air in consternation,

ringing all the bells of her silver collar; then she gave a quick pat with one foot, then with the other, drawing both feet back as if they had encountered a red-hot coal. Then the aggrieved nose was cautiously inserted underneath the hedgehog, with a view to find out some more vulnerable place, and the hedgehog, thus impelled, rolled on a little; then Marigold jumped first to one side, then to the other, to put her adversary off his guard (for Marigold was a greyhound of high race, and therefore of high courage), and adventured, much to the damage of her nose, another poke. At last she lay down with her head upon her paws, watching her prey, just as a cat watches a mouse-hole. Woe to the hedgehog if, deceived by those half-closed eyes, he ventures to uncoil before Marigold leaves her post!

Katy, on her part, was making quick work with the beautiful lilies as they glim-

mered so gracefully between their broad green leaves; sometimes in large close beds, sometimes scattered here and there amongst the moss and the dead leaves, with a tuft of fern or of Solomon's seal, or a stalk of whortleberry intermixed. The lilies were in their earliest and loveliest stage, the lower bells fully out, the tops of the stems crowned with pale green buds, each larger and paler than the last.

There knelt Katy, filling her great basket; now listening to the nightingales, now singing snatches of her own sweet songs.

"Give thee good-morrow, busy bee!" was her greeting to one of those industrious insects, as he passed by heavily laden.

"Give thee good even! would be the better salutation," said she; "for I think we have both been long enough plundering the flowers, and may take ourselves home."

Accordingly she summoned her two attendants, when her basket was quite, and she herself almost, overset by a thousand curvets and gambols played off by Marigold, in honour of Major Delancy, who had climbed up one of the steep terraces as lightly as the four-footed favourite herself, and now stood by the side of the fair flower-gatherer.

"I have startled you, Miss Warner; and Marigold and I have scattered the lilies; but I will soon pick them up. And you must let me carry them. Yes, indeed you must, I am used to carry flowers. Happy they who have only known such burdens."

"Yes," said Katy, "you are thinking of the poor soldier, and doubtless his knapsack—"

"Aye," interposed Arthur, "knapsack, and musket, and kettle, and kit, all that he has, and all that he has not, in

the roughest weather, and in an enemy's country. Those are among the sad realities of life. I am afraid that I was thinking of burthens less tangible, but fully as painful—Are you going home?" continued he, interrupting himself. "Shall we send Jacob back through the fields? That is the nearest way. And will you allow me to take his place as your attendant, and see you home through the park?"

Katy felt unusually shy; but she said "Yes," simply because she did not know how to say No; and for a little while they walked through the wood in silence, Arthur putting aside the branches and guiding her into the smoothest ways; and, at last, when they had come into something like a path, winding round the edge of the coppice, offering her his arm.

"I am walking too fast for you," he said. "You will be tired."

Katy had often felt—nobody could help

feeling—Arthur Delancy's peculiar sweetness of manner, his constant consideration for others, his care for their convenience, his deference to their feelings,—in a word the total absence of selfishness. It was high-breeding, the very highest breeding; but it was also somewhat more. This evening she felt more than ever this peculiar charm, and yet, instead of putting her at ease, it had exactly the contrary effect; so after saying:

"No, indeed, I am not tired; I am never tired; I could walk all day."

She suddenly uttered that which so very few people, under any temptation, ever do utter—that is, the exact thought which arose in her mind, and exclaimed:

"Oh! how I wish that Honor were here!"

"Her companion half started, almost stopped. He commanded himself, however, and replied:

"I, for my part, rejoice in her absence. I wished to see you alone. You are young and inexperienced, Miss Warner; but you are also acute and observant; and I am sure that you must have observed, even if my father had not, as he has just informed me, endeavoured to prepare you for my proposal, that I was only waiting for some such opportunity to entreat you to accept my hand, and share my destiny."

It was now Katy's turn to start and tremble. There are some things for which all the preparation in the world is of no avail; and a proposal of marriage—especially the first proposal—is one of them. Her colour went and came; and if Arthur had not found her a seat on the stool of a felled beech, she would probably so far have disgraced her country breeding as to have fainted.

He soothed her into composure; and throwing himself on the ground at her side, proceeded:

"I trust this discomposure is not caused by aversion?—No!—Surely you said no! It is, then, but the modesty which blends so sweetly with your charming frankness; and I may hope that our union, which would crown the wishes of all my family, and which is equally agreeable to your own, may be delayed no longer than the settlements due to so great an heiress, render necessary. You come to us, Miss Warner, bringing wealth which will redeem the forfeited estates of our old and honourable house—which will save the peace, the health, the very existence of my father; and yet he feels—we all feel, I most of all—that that wealth fades into nothing when compared with the loveliness, the innocence, the goodness, of its owner. My father already loves you as a daughter: My whole life shall be devoted to the endeavour to render you happy. Will you not speak a word?—not one word?"

Poor Katy hung her head in silence, and even turned her blushing cheek aside.

"Will you not speak one single word? Well, then, your flowers shall be your interpreters. Give me one of the lilies in your basket, and that answer shall content me!"

Gathering herself up almost firmly, Katy at last found courage to speak:

"I love Lord Delancy dearly; and I know—no one better—all your goodness, Major Delancy;—Oh! far too good—far too clever for me! But I must ask one question. Honor—Were you never engaged to her?"

"Never! on the word of a gentleman!" replied Major Delancy, with an open firmness that it would have been impossible to disbelieve.

"It is very strange," said Katy; "those Spanish songs in your handwriting, and your never speaking when you met."

"Those songs are of my writing; so far is true, Katy; and here I might tell you what is also true, that I was the bosom friend of her only brother. But that would only be part of the truth; and it is due to you and to myself, to make one of those confessions most humbling to man's weakness. Three years ago I did love, or I thought I loved, Honor Clive. I laid my very heart at her feet, and was rejected. Since then, we have never met, except in your presence. I do not ask, because I am sure that she has behaved with the admirable propriety which characterizes her every word and action, by keeping my offer secret."

"She has never said one word," replied Katy, much relieved.

"And this then has been the cause of your hesitation? The only cause? Is there no happier man?"

"No," said Katy stoutly; "I have never

seen any young men, except Charles and Harry, and young Mr. Thorpe. And next to Mr. Langhton and dear Lord Delancy, I like you. But how can you think of me after Honor—dear, dear, Honor?"

It was a strange frankness, and puzzling to answer. He took her own tone, and told the truth.

"She would have nothing to say to me Katy. But you—will you not give me one of those lilies?"

And with her lilies in his button-hole, and her hand resting on his arm, the betrothed couple quitted the coppice.

After a little gentle talk he ventured to inquire, still very soothingly, for there was a nervousness about her, rare in that bright and vigorous spirit:

"Since not from any chance expression of Miss Clive, what could have given you the suspicion which had like to have cheated me of two flowers?"

"Oh! such a different person from Honor," said Katy,—"a gipsy."

"A gipsy, a fortune-teller?" enquired Arthur.

"Yes," said she, "a gipsy fortune-teller. It is quite a history. Yesterday morning I was riding on the downs with Marigold and Jacob Stokes. We had had a good canter, for Jacob was on Honor's pony; and were on the point of turning back when we came to the steep ridge that lies on the top of the narrow valley, called the Soak. You know the Soak? Quite full of alders, and willows, and cotton grass, where the stream oozes through, with great patches of gorse at the sides, looking like masses of gold in the sunshine. So sweet, too!—oh, so sweet! Grandmamma says she remembers an old shepherd, who built himself a hut amongst the gorse. I don't wonder at it. I should like to live there myself. Vestiges of the garden are there still, a gooseberry-bush or

so, and an old apple-tree; and I suppose there must be some remains of the cabin, for as we stood looking down on the Soak we saw smoke sailing along the hill side, and two or three children searching for plover's eggs on the downs."

"And these were gipsy children?" asked Arthur.

"I suppose so," resumed Katy. "As we were looking at them, a tall woman appeared close to me, and caught hold of Britomarte's bridle. Now Britomarte has no fancy for tall women, in red cloaks, who seize her by the bridle, and she soon shook herself free. But she is the gentlest creature in the world when once her fright is over, so after a little prancing she became quiet. And then the gipsy insisted upon telling my fortune. I had never had my fortune told, and had no objection; only I had no money, and the gipsy declared that it was essential that her hand

should be crossed with a piece of silver. Luckily Jacob, who is the handiest boy in the world, and always has a knife, or a bit of string, or a hooked stick in his pocket —in short, whatever one happens to want, —luckily Jacob had sixpence, and that, and the promise of sending him with half-a-crown to-day, contented her. So then—" Here Katy came to a full stop.

"What then, dear Katy? Pray go on," said Arthur.

"Well, then she took my hand, and said there was a cross in the line of life; that in a very few days—"

"Go on, I entreat."

"Some one should say he loved me; but that he should really love not me, but my dearest friend."

"Did she say more?"

"No. She was gone as suddenly as she appeared; and to-day, when Jacob rode to take her the half-crown, she and the children had disappeared."

"That is strange, indeed," observed the Major; "strangest, perhaps, of all. And you—"

"I told the whole story to dear grandmamma; and she advised me—to do—as I have done, in short," said poor Katy. "Was I wrong?"

"Never wrong," replied Arthur, very warmly, "to follow in all things the dictates of one whose simplicity is the truest wisdom! Never wrong to tell all that is in your own pure heart! That woman must have been an emissary of Sir Vivian. Here is my father. We will not mention her to him."

Lord Delancy's ecstasy in welcoming his future daughter-in-law was delightful to his son. "God grant that I may make her happy!" was his inward prayer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ROMAN STATION.

THE intended marriage, although known by everybody, still passed as officially unannounced. The ceremony was to be performed with the strictest privacy, none but the two families being present, and the young couple departing at once for a year's absence on the Continent. A highly recommended maid, accustomed to foreign travel, had been engaged by Mrs. Osborne, and was now at Atherton. Honor's advice to Mrs. Warner had been that she only

should accompany the fair bride. She knew Arthur well, and felt how tenderly he would be drawn towards the sweet creature, who would depend upon him for her slightest action, her hourly amusement, almost her daily speech. She knew the charm of intelligent ignorance when combined with youth and beauty. Here that ignorance took its most graceful form. It was clearer every day that theirs was no love match. The lady (allowing for her girlish modesty) was too open; the gentleman too reserved. But daily intercourse would substitute for the frail passion, love, the firm but gradual foundations of habit, esteem, and affection: no such bad exchange, after all. So Katy was to go alone.

Lady Lucy, finding that the spouse she had selected for her niece was devoted to the turf and the dice box, had repented her hasty anger, and had written to request

her return. A brother of her father, also, struck by her spirit, or unwilling that so near a relative should be known to fill a dependent situation, had entreated her to make his house her home. But resisting both invitations, Honor had promised Mrs. Warner to remain at the Farm until Katy should return to Atherton.

Privately as everything was to be conducted, the preparations for so long an absence, and the settlement of so large a property, consumed nearly the whole time to the day fixed for the payment of the mortgage; and at last, that very day itself had come to be chosen for signing the deeds and performing the marriage ceremony.

Our friend Mr. Langhton, deeply engaged in this most important business, and other affairs connected with the executorship, had been little seen at Atherton. Sir Vivian, a bird of ill omen, was known

to be flitting about the neighbourhood, although his very name was carefully kept from the noble owner of the hall, just now furnished with a pleasant excitement in the presence of Mr. Langhton's favourite, Mrs. Osborne. To show her the beauties of the vicinity filled pleasantly the time of expectation, always lingering, and never felt to linger so painfully as when, as in this case, expectation was mingled with anxiety. Nobody could tell why, nobody perhaps would have confessed to the feeling, but it weighed upon every mind; and as the time of suspense shortened (and it wanted now but three days to that fixed for the marriage), the weight pressed more and more heavily; so they tried the old remedy, and drove about in hopes of leaving care behind.

One of Katy's greatest charms was her dark, glossy hair, curling in close rings like the tendrils of the vine, all round her

neck, that swan-like neck on which her head was placed so finely.

Before he had called her his queen, Mr. Langhton, who loved pet names, and had always petted Katy, used to call her Miss Wigsby. And really it was difficult to imagine that such a quantity of bright curls all grew upon that little head. The bright hair, the bright eyes, the bright complexion, the bright teeth, the dimples, the smiles, and the elastic figure, becoming every day more firm and vigorous—all denoted health as perfect as a woman could enjoy; but perhaps of all these tokens of youthful strength, the bright curls were the most striking.

Mrs. Bell, proud as she well might be of her beautiful daughter, took especial delight in all that displayed their shining luxuriance. Accordingly she had herself purchased for Katy one of those flapping broad-leaved Leghorn hats, almost in the

state in which they leave Tuscany, and brought it to Katy's room this very morning to be worn on an excursion to an ancient Roman encampment, commanding the extensive and varied views chosen by the masters of the world for their walled towns and entrenched stations in barbarian lands.

The party from the hall was to form part of the expedition. Mrs. Bell was to accompany Lady Cardonnel and Mrs. Osborne in the carriage, whilst the gentlemen rode on horseback with the younger ladies.

Little as the two girls, who lived with each other more as elder sister with younger than as governess and pupil, were disposed to differ, this excursion caused something like a discussion between them. Katy had taken one of her fancies that Honor should ride Britomarte. She wished to see how her two favourites

looked together; this at least was the reason she alleged. Perhaps her secret thought might be a desire to leave the favourite horse as a parting gift to the friend who staid behind to comfort her grandmamma. Of this she said nothing; and Honora, asserting her own desire to ride the good old pony as long as opposition on a trifling point seemed wise, at length consented.

Katy, with the new hat, and its long lutestring ribbons floating on the air, looked more than commonly radiant when she joined the party at the gate of the court-yard. Disappointment met her there in the shape of another pet, or rather of his absence.

Jacob Stokes, a true country boy, had not yet arrived at the age in which country boys delight in finery; those days were yet to come. At present his tendencies lay so much in a contrary direction,

that Katy, whose first thought had been to procure a new suit for this devoted follower, found the new suit want renewal so often, that she had been fain to coax Mr. Langhton into giving the Atherton tailor a permanent and unlimited order for Jacob's apparel. Even this magnificent provision sometimes failed. Jacob's tastes were semi-aquatic, so that his clothes were as often wet as dry. Jacob was a climber, and spent in the air—that is to say, on the tree-tops after squirrels and birds' nests—much of the time not passed in the water, so that his jacket and trousers were much oftener torn than whole.

On this unlucky day both misfortunes had befallen the young gentleman. He had torn his every day jacket and trousers in the most unseemly manner the night before, in an encounter with a jagged branch in his descent from a fir tree; which tree he had mounted to secure a

pair of ring-doves, intended as a present for Miss Honor, having preferred the total ruin of his raiment and some damage to his skin to the possible loss of the birds. Whilst on this very morning an awkward ducking from a boat on the mere had soaked his Sunday garments through and through.

Poor Jacob was an orphan, so that there were no kind female friends to sew up his rents, or to dry his wettings. Indeed, Mrs. Bell, who used to declare that even Katy's fortune could never stand Jacob's waste, was one day heard to admit, in a fit of relenting, "that to be sure the child had never known the comfort of a mother to scold him." So he put on such rags as did not offend against decency, probably the pre-legacy suit, and being rather ashamed to present himself at the Hall stables—where, being a great favourite with masters and men, he was usually mounted

on such occasions,—he made his appearance on his own old donkey, and happening to fall in with his unfriend Mrs. Bell, got sent off so peremptorily that when enquired after by his young mistress, neither he nor Marigold could be found.

Mrs. Bell was indignant; she ordered Joseph to attend her daughter. She harangued on Jacob's iniquities: "In rags, and on his donkey!—but that boy will ride anything, all Atherton knows that. There is nothing with four legs that Jacob won't ride. Before he was five years old," continued she, addressing herself now to an enlarged audience, "some show-people who came to the village with a camel and a monkey, put him on the camel's hump, and had well nigh carried him off to take the place of the monkey, only Dr. Glenham and Joseph set off in pursuit—the doctor not choosing a Christian child should be carried off for a monkey! He cried to

go with them then; and some day or other you'll see that he'll be riding an elephant!"

Everybody took Jacob's part; and Major Delancy promised that some fine morning she should see him so smart that she would not know him.

Whilst this took place in one part of the group, a different dialogue was going on in another.

"Why are you not riding Britomarte? have you quarrelled with her?" said Lord Delancy to Katy.

"No," was the reply; "but Honor——"

"Oh, Miss Clive!" interrupted Lord Delancy, "she, I suppose, has quarrelled with the pony!"

"No, dear Lord Delancy—no, indeed! I had much ado to make Honor ride Britomarte, but I wanted to see them together—" and then she stopped suddenly—"I'll tell you why another time."

By this time old Joseph had arrived, mounted on the steady steed that had for a dozen years drawn Mrs. Bell in her one-horse chaise to market; and dressed in the well-preserved suit in which he had, for at least as many years, driven his good mistress on week days, and attended church on the sabbath;—looking, in short, exactly like what he was, a most respectable farm servant, but matching Lord Delancy's carriage, postilions and grooms, much worse than Jacob, whether on camel or donkey! Katy jumped upon her pony; Mrs. Bell was handed into the carriage; and the cavalcade set forth.

The road up to the downs on the opposite side of the valley to the beautiful demesne of Lord Delancy—which, beginning in park and gardens, merged into a wild and wooded chase—was little more than a cart track. After leaving the village, with its cornfields and meadows, cultiva-

tion disappeared bit by bit. First came a bit of woodland, graphically called the "Scrubs," divided from the road by a stunted hedge, just now gay with the white blossoms of the wayfaring tree, giving token of a water-course from the hills; whilst on the other side of the road, gay slips of the beautiful sainfoin, now in full flower, and gayer patches of turnip-seed in its yellow blossom, ran up between masses of russet furze, or the short, parched-up grass on the steep ascent—forming one of those contrasts seldom seen without the aid of man.

The Scrubs edged off into a ragged fir plantation; many trees looking dead or half dead, the branches on one side being altogether sere and bare; and then the trees ceased altogether in one wild group of Scotch firs, which flung their giant arms across the road, crowning the hill with a boldness worthy of the pencil of Salvator Rosa.

They were now fairly on the downs. The whole party paused to look at Atherton, which lay beneath them as a picture; its deep winding road, its bright waters, its grey church, its orchards, its cottages, its farm, and the magnificent park and mansion, which in spite of all assurance every one felt to be trembling in the balance.

Lord Delancy gazed on the view, then on his son, and on the two young women, as they sate together near the carriage, Katy bright as the summer air, Honor pale and silent beside her. A bitterness which he could not overcome passed across him as his eye fell upon that pallid face, and noted how cautiously his son avoided meeting those gentle looks.

"Now for the view which I shall show you," said Katy; "the view which looks down upon three counties, and sees parts of more than I can tell. We must cross

this ocean of downs, and then descend the willowy bottom, and then climb up the Hollow Way, and there we are."

"It is not so far as Katy's description would make you think," said Lady Cardonnel parenthetically to Mrs. Osborne. "The view, seen over an abrupt precipice, a sheer descent of craggy turf, is, on a clear day like this, really splendid."

"Why, then, are we waiting?" asked Lord Delancy; adding, with the cold respect which is so painful to its object, "If Miss Clive will ride on, the carriage may follow."

Honor made way instantly; and then exerted herself to manage the spirited creature she rode, and keep pace with the cavalcade.

The level plain was passed at a canter; and they descended, at a somewhat slower rate, a hill which dipped into a bottom, where sallow bushes betrayed the presence

of a stream that first trickled across a road ("The Hollow Way," as Katy called it,) which seemed hardly wide enough for the carriage, and crept winding up the lofty hill that fronted them; the steepness being somewhat mitigated by the road sloping diagonally round the shoulder of the hill to the top. On the summit was a narrow table-land, marked by an embankment, said to be of the time of the Romans, terminated by the famous view.

They paused for a moment in the little valley, the postilions rather unwilling to risk their town-built carriage on so rugged a road, hoping, perhaps, that the ladies might prefer walking up the ascent. No such motion was made. Mrs. Bell was too well pleased to find herself, for the first time, in a carriage and four, to dream of quitting that post of grandeur; and of the other two Mrs. Osborne feared the fatigue for Lady Cardonnel, and Lady Cardonnel

for Mrs. Osborne. So the postilions let the horses wet their mouths at the brooklet that crossed the road, and then slowly proceeded in the wake of the riders.

Katy was wild with glee. The fresh air of the hills, always so exhilarating; the exercise which she loved so well; the beauty of the day; above all, the manner in which her two favourites, Honor and Britomarte, became each other—delighted her very heart. Her new hat had fallen back, hanging only by the strings; her glossy curls were all dishevelled by the wind; and she galloped here and there, all her cares, even the coming wedding, forgotten; laughing and shouting with her sweet, young voice, and looking the whilst so exquisitely pretty that nobody cared to stop her.

Lord Delancy, who saw that she had attracted Arthur's attention, was quite provoked when her mother, in care for

her complexion, and rather scandalized at her want of decorum, called to her to put on her hat.

Katy was at the moment when she received this command rather ahead of Honora on the lower side of the winding road; and, chancing to obey it, gave the large flapping Leghorn hat, with its long streamers, such a toss right in the eyes of the high-bred and skittish mare that she sprang off like a racer, with the Hollow Way for a course and the precipice for a goal.

A general scream issued from the carriage.

"She is a dead woman," said Lord Delancy, in a voice so deep and unearthly that it was heard through all the shriller exclamations of the terrified women.

"Follow her! For God's sake stop her! Will you let her perish before your eyes?" cried Lady Cardonnel.

The old servant Joseph, to whom this was addressed, answered:

"As to stopping her, my lady, that is sooner said than done. And as to following, if any one attempts to follow her, he signs her death-warrant. That mare's thorough-bred, and the sound of another horse following on the hard road would be like whip and spur. The poor young lady has one chance: the hill is the steepest in the country, and if she can but keep her heart and her seat—"

"Katy! my Katy!" interrupted Mrs. Bell, with a mother's piteous cry, "the pony's off too!"

And it was indeed obvious that the pony was following at full, but unequal speed, the track of the mare. A few seconds made it also evident that this poor animal had not run away, but that it was urged forward by its rider, whose generous but uncalculating efforts to save her friend

would probably have no other result than her own destruction.

Joseph, although his own weight, and the age of his horse, rendered any attempt to overtake them out of the question, was so moved by the cries of his mistress, and the danger of her child, that he galloped forward together with the grooms to render assistance, if assistance were possible, or to bring relief from the terrible uncertainty that prevailed. The carriage horses were also urged to their utmost speed; and for the first time Major Delancy was missed and enquired for.

At the moment after Britomarte's starting, he had leaped the bank which divided the road from the down, and was now seen pursuing a parallel course higher up the hill; evidently intending to gain an angle from which he might dart on the terrified steed. It was the only chance of saving Honora, but the party in the carriage

saw with sinking hearts that it diminished every moment; that the strength of the heavy roadster, and the skill of his rider, would tell as nothing compared with the spirit, the fleetness, and the goading fear of the blood animal on which she was mounted. The mare gained ground at every stroke; Katy still following with hopeless perseverance; and Arthur a little in advance of the pony, but still striving vainly to get up to Honor.

The road now wound suddenly round the shoulder of the hill, and one by one the riders disappeared from the party in the carriage, whose fear became more intense as the uncertainty increased and the precipice neared.

Mrs. Bell in spite of all dissuasion continued mechanically to scream, "My Katy! my child! my child! my Katy!" Lady Cardonnel was in gasping, sobbing, choking hysterics; and Mrs. Osborne

drowned in tears. But the person who probably felt most was he who neither wept, nor sighed, nor screamed, the stern and proud Lord Delancy, whose last glance at that gentle creature had been a glance of hatred, whose last word a word of scorn.

Moments seemed ages in that agony of fear, and yet all dreaded its termination. They urged the drivers forward as if they had dared to hope, and yet they all knew that humanly speaking hope there was none.

Suddenly a loud discordant shout was heard coming round the side of the hill, and fear for a moment seemed lost in certainty. All felt that it proceeded from Joseph's horror at witnessing the fatal plunge.

This conclusion passed through every mind, and Katy seemed now the only care; when suddenly as they were wheeling round the steep ascent, Joseph himself

was seen advancing, waving his hat and shouting with the voice of a stentor that all was well.

A few minutes more brought them to their intended destination—the Roman camp—where they found the whole of the actors in the scene as safe as Joseph had asserted, and reinforced by two new characters in the shape of Marigold, and Jacob Stokes on his beloved donkey.

When they arrived, old Joseph had just lifted Honora from her saddle and placed her on the grass, where she sat, very pale, trembling, and silent. Major Delancy, equally silent and equally pale, was holding the pony. Jacob, still seated on his donkey, kept a tight grip of Britomarte, whilst Katy stood leaning over her dear governess, alternately laughing and crying; now kissing the pale cheeks of her friend, now shaking hands with Jacob Stokes; praising him, defending

Britomarte, and accusing herself all in a breath. Mrs. Bell seized on Katy for the double purpose of hugging and scolding, and the rest of the party showered question after question upon the truant boy and Major Delancy. From his short breathless answers and the more detailed account of Katy's squire, it appeared that that faithful adherent, finding himself excluded from the expedition, and thinking, as he expressed it, that his young lady might want him, had set off by a nearer bridle road to the place of destination, where he lay perdu behind the bank. When Britomarte approached, he and Marigold started up so suddenly before her eyes, that their appearance and his shout of alarm had the effect of turning that sensitive animal from her dangerous path, and caused her so far to slacken her speed, that in clambering over the steep bank that bordered the road on the safer side, Miss Clive's own

efforts had stopped her. Jacob, no mean judge, volunteered high praise of the young lady's courage and horsemanship:

"Miss Katy could not have sate the mare better."

Katy had been taken care of by her betrothed bridegroom. Too late to stop the first runaway, he had probably saved the life of the second, whose over-urged pony had reached the very brink of the crag without power to check its speed, and now stood quivering in every limb with the sense of escaped danger.

The whole party, leaving the mother and daughter to their natural transports, had now gathered round Miss Clive, who sate, as in a trance, making no reply to Lady Cardonnel's congratulations, and neither returning nor seeming to notice the affectionate caresses of Mrs. Osborne. She remained seemingly unconscious of all that was

passing round her until Lord Delancy asked in a broken voice:

"Are you hurt, Honora?"

The name and the accent seemed to thrill through her frame. She shivered; looked up with one of her sweet smiles, said, "No, I am quite well!" and sank back in a fainting fit upon the turf.

It is hardly necessary to add that none of them looked at the famous prospect they had come to visit.

CHAPTER XV.

TEMPTATION.

WHILST these events were proceeding at the old Roman Station, the Rectory was the scene of a somewhat unexpected visitation.

It had happened this morning that the good doctor had received a proof of the "Troades," which, printed at the University Press, and submitted to a learned friend in one of the colleges, was enriched with annotations and queries, which however profitable to the future correctness of the edition, had, for the moment, the effect

of driving the excellent editor well nigh crazy! Questions which seemed settled were thrown open; doubts which had been smoothed down into certainties were resolved into their old unsatisfactory form; and a universal note of interrogation seemed spread over the new readings, which were to convince every scholar, from Cambridge to Göttingen. Dear Dr. Glenham felt, as many a dabbler in print has felt before him, that the pen of a critical friend is a sharp weapon.

When the packet arrived he was in the act of dressing; and, stopping the operation of the toilet to look over the proof, ran down, just as he was, to his library, to examine various editions, and muster up authorities for the use of a disputed monosyllable, which seemed to him a question of life and death.

Now the doctor adhered rigidly to his old, clerical costume of black stockings

and knee breeches; and having forgotten to leave off the gauze stockings which he wore in the winter (without editing a play of Euripides, one may contrive sometimes to forget that it is summer in our climate), and being in the act of donning his silken hose, he still presented the somewhat anomalous appearance of one black leg and one white one, when several hours afterwards, Sir Vivian Delancy was ushered into his library.

At no point of his editorial labours had that den of disorder assumed such an appearance of confusion as now. Books covered the tables; books littered the chairs; books strewed the floor. The room looked as untidy as the master—who, besides the odd legs, had one knee-buckle unfastened, no studs in either wristband, which straggled forth from his grey dressing-gown, and no cravat round his neck—and this at four o'clock of a fine summer day!

Host and visitor were taken aback; this, however, could not last long. Dr. Glenham, always a gentleman, recovered at once from his learned abstraction, and from the shame of being caught in it; and Sir Vivian, a man of the world, with a point to gain, took care to see as little of the disorder as might be: he even, whilst the rector was clearing a seat for him, contrived to intimate his admiration of the rare scholarship evinced by the books amidst which he stood, and to express something like envy of the learned abstraction, of which the result would be the enlightenment of the world in general, and of the universities in particular.

The doctor, now completely aroused, kept his own counsel as to the manner in which his labours had been called to account by one of the most eminent luminaries of those universities; and, waiving his guest's compliments with something

like a deprecatory smile, requested to know in what he could be of use to him?

"You hardly seem to remember me, Dr. Glenham," said the guest; "yet, surely, you were Rector of Atherton when I returned from India, longer ago than I like to remember."

"Yes," replied the doctor, "I was so, but your visit was, I think, a short one; and I was much engaged at Cambridge, not having chosen to resign my college tutorship, until the examination of my pupils had taken place, — two of them were wranglers of the year. We must, however, have met; and it does not need a personal acquaintance to inspire me with a deep interest in the welfare of any of the family of Delancy."

Sir Vivian bowed as accepting the compliment, and the good doctor continued—

"I owe to Lord Delancy the home where my days have passed easily, hap-

pily, and not, I trust, without benefit to my flock. He has much contributed by his society and his co-operation to my personal enjoyment, and my pastoral usefulness; whilst to his son Arthur I am bound by all those associations which link the old to the young. I have patted his head as a child, and have lived to see him fulfilling the promise of his boyhood, as a brave and honourable man. Next to my own household I love the Delancy's; and I confess, Sir Vivian, that the sight of you in this house is very pleasant to me, since I cannot but hope, that even now, at the eleventh hour, you have done me the honour to select me as the bearer of friendly overtures to persons who are, after all, your nearest kinsmen. I know that there is in the very incidents of a lawsuit (which is, after all, a sort of warfare)—an element which, while it pushes on to conquest, serves also to embitter the combatants.

But when once the battle is won, it is in the nature of all men—especially, as we are apt to believe of all Englishmen—to forgive and forget—a process much easier, by the way, to the victor than to the vanquished. If you come to me as a peacemaker, I shall most readily accept the office."

Dr. Glenham spoke in perfect good faith. Lord Delancy, too proud a man to make unnecessary confidences, had never alluded to the private wrongs which had envenomed the one great wound; and the simple scholar, ignorant of the desperate state of his noble friend's affairs, hoped and believed that the sore might yet be healed by a few concessions on either side, and that Sir Vivian had fixed upon him as the mediator.

"First, let me ask, my good sir, whether you happen to know how matters stand betwixt us?" inquired his guest.

"No other way," replied the Doctor, "than as all men who read the papers know of the great will cause. One of those causes terrible to the contending parties, in which, wherever the abstract right may lie, there is on either side such a show of reason and such a chance of success that lawyers may honestly urge on their clients from term to term, from year to year, from lustre to lustre, until the expenses of the loser may even exceed the value of the original object of contention. In such a case it behoves the rich man who succeeds to consider the state of the poor kinsman who loses, and—"

"Why, there it is," interrupted Sir Vivian. "There is the crying injustice! They, the losers and their friends, talk of the great law-suit as the cause of their ruin, utterly forgetting the reckless extravagance of generation upon generation, —builders of mansions, collectors of pic-

tures, furnishers of libraries, wasters and spendthrifts in every shape; and then—Nay, hear me out, good doctor;—then, when the first and only man of their race, who for two centuries has known how to make money and how to keep it, steps in to preserve the old property in the old name, he is visited with as much reproach and reprobation as if, in lending his own money, he had committed a highway robbery, or as if demanding it back were a murder."

"I am to understand then, Sir Vivian," said the Rector, "that the report which announced you as the real holder of the large mortgages on your kinsman's property is true? And if you have indeed advanced the money with the view of retaining the old estates in the old name, and making Major Delancy your heir in fact, as he is in law, I for one, shall hear of such a purpose with unmingled pleasure and admiration."

Sir Vivian answered the part of this speech which suited him, leaving the conclusion unnoticed.

"Yes, I hold mortgages over the entire property; and if not redeemed by twelve o'clock at noon on the day after to-morrow, notice of foreclosure having been duly given, the estates and manors of Atherton and Delancy, with all their royalties and dependencies, become absolutely mine. It was not, however, of this, Dr. Glenham, that I came to speak. They tell me that you are excellent as a parish priest,—the friend as well as the pastor of your flock; and I come to make appeal to you in that character, in behalf of the widow and the orphan—not such as require the common succour that riches can give; but those to whom riches has proved a peril far greater than poverty; the simple-minded parents who are about to fling the richest heiress in England, herself almost a child, into the arms of a landless and penniless soldier."

"Be very sure, Sir Vivian," said the Doctor, "that the whole circumstances of the estate are known to them all. Mrs. Warner declared to me herself, that the son of her old landlord, one whom she had known from his earliest childhood, was in her eye preferable to the son of the richest Duke in England. Katy will have enough for both."

"A man ten years her senior!"

"Pshaw! my good sir!—a man of six-and-twenty and a girl of sixteen are contemporaries. Katy, to be sure, is full young. But these great heirs are somewhat in the position of princes, and are affianced and wedded at an earlier age than common mortals. Poor things! it is a part of their destiny to lose the joyous privilege of girlhood, the happy years that come between the restraints of the child and the cares of the matron. But the young couple are going abroad, where,

without any set form of instruction, so quick and docile a girl as Katy will insensibly acquire all that is wanting to fit her for the station she will have to fill. No man is more accomplished than Major Delancy, or more calculated to train a clever uneducated girl into a cultivated wife. She is most fortunate in having fallen into such hands."

"You think so?" said Sir Vivian, with a very peculiar expression. Then drawing his chair close to his host he continued in a low voice and with frequent pauses:—

"Have you seen, Dr. Glenham, a young woman, by name Honora Clive, who now fills the post of governess to Miss Warner? Yes? You know her then? Did you ever hear, that three years ago, that young lady was known as the daughter of Colonel Clive, and of his wife Lady Honora, daughter of the famous beauty, the Countess of Rossborough, and connected with half the

noble families in Ireland? No? You did not know this? Well, this young lady, whose father and brother were then alive, was the object of an idolatrous passion on the part of Arthur Delancy. You look mistrustfully. Ask Lady Cardonnel; ask, if you will, Major Delancy or Miss Clive. They were quartered together at Valenciennes during the time the allied armies occupied France. The brother and the lover were bosom friends."

"Do you mean to say that they were betrothed?" enquired Dr. Glenham.

"Of that I know nothing. What I do know is that three years ago he was madly in love. The father and brother were living then; now they are dead; and she is here a poor governess, the hired governess of his destined bride."

"A strange tale!" exclaimed the Rector, in spite of himself much startled.

"A true tale!" said the visitor, "on that

I will pledge my life. Make the best you can of it, and you will find the poor girl deserted and the rich one married. You know Miss Clive, you say. I have never seen her; but I have heard and I can well believe that the elegant and cultivated woman still maintains her influence; that the red and white of Katy's cheek is valueless in her suitor's eyes, compared with the grace, the talent, the composed sweetness of her rival. Think you yourself what chance of domestic felicity may be found in an alliance beginning with a preference for another. Hearken, Dr. Glenham, these women are, as it were, flung upon your protection. It becomes your character and your office to acquaint Mrs. Warner with what you have heard; to caution her that the future happiness, aye, and the future conduct and reputation of a girl so young, so beautiful, and so unguarded as her grand-

daughter, may be wrecked in this union. There is no man whose position renders him so fit to give this warning. There is no one," added he, in a still lower voice, "so interested in the warning being heeded. Tell her to make her granddaughter at once a ward in Chancery; and then, if three years hence, the fine and spirited lad, her old playmate, who did not wait for her riches to lay his heart at her feet, should be objected to for want of wealth, I promise to settle upon him all this estate of Atherton, with its goodly farms and manors, its waters and its woodlands, its chases and its downs—aye, and the advowson to boot, which would be a provision for his brother. Break off this marriage—only break off this marriage—and rely on me for more than I have promised." And without waiting for an answer Sir Vivian departed.

And what said our good Doctor, as

still with one white leg and one black, he sank back into his seat?

"Tempter!" cried he, "tempter!"

It is one of the safeguards of the simple, good folk of this world, that the cunning wicked ones seldom give them credit for real goodness. They think, for the most part, that everybody is marketable, and that any resistance they may happen to meet with will yield to a higher bidding; and so they lose the benefit of much previous caution by a too open avowal of their ulterior purpose.

Had Sir Vivian contented himself with the impression which he had really made, by stating that which was actually true of Major Delancy and Miss Clive, and garnishing that truth with his own false inferences, he would so far have carried his point as to have sent the Doctor full of alarm to caution Mrs. Warner. The allusion to Harry, and the bribe of the

bequest of Atherton, showed at once that either a revenge was his object, for which no price could be too high; or that, as seemed most probable, he feared that the long-coveted property should be snatched from his grasp at the last moment, redeemed by Richard Strange's hoards.

"I will go to her," thought the Doctor, "to warn her against this man's machinations. I'll go to her at once," resolved he, magnanimously, throwing aside the Greek commentator which had stolen into his hand; "and then I'll come back and put up the proof. After all I was a fool to vex myself about my good friend's criticisms. He is an able man, a very able man; but he has not given himself to this play for six months as I have done. So I shall stick to my own readings, and desire the printer to send the other sheets straight to me."

A wise resolution, which, to the honour of both these worthies, caused no coolness on either side.

CHAPTER XVI.

RELENTINGS.

When Dr. Glenham reached the Great Farm, he found its excellent mistress just recovering from the emotion which she had undergone, in hearing of the danger of the two girls, who might be said to divide her heart between them: Honor's sweetness had fairly captivated Mrs. Warner.

"Think if we had lost her!" exclaimed the old lady, "Katy would have died too; for, first and last, her giddiness was the cause of the danger. She would insist on

Honor's riding the mare. Then she flirted her great hat right in front of that skittish creature's eyes. And then, poor thing, she set off as hard as the pony could lay legs to the ground, to follow the runaway, thus causing her to redouble her speed. We never can be thankful enough to that little lad, Jacob Stokes, who is always in the way when he is wanted, and was certainly, under Providence, the saving of dear Honor; as Major Delancy, by his great presence of mind and admirable horsemanship, was the rescuer of Katy. What a blessing it is to think that that dear child will have such a protector through the trials of life."

"I am exactly of your opinion, Mrs. Warner," said the Doctor; "but I have just had a visitor whose object was to inspire both of us with very different feelings."

And then, being alone with the good

lady—Mrs. Bell having insisted on the young ladies' lying down, and being engaged in narrating the escape, and dilating upon Jacob's merits to everybody who would listen to her—he related the whole conversation.

"May Heaven forgive him!" said she. "He must be as old as I am, and yet he thinks of nothing but money and revenge. The money he must leave behind him, as poor Richard Strange has done. But revenge—that is a grievous load to carry with him to the grave, and beyond the grave! May God turn his heart, for He alone can! As to this matter, dear Dr. Glenham, it is certain that Arthur Delancy did propose to Honor, three years ago, and that she refused him. He told Katy so himself, and that accounts for a sort of shyness which has always existed between them; men seldom pardon a rejection of that sort. It always oversets Honor to

think of the days when she lived with her father and her brother Lionel. You know that she gave her little portion to purchase Captain Clive's commission, and to pay his debts. He seems to have been one of those charming persons (not very prudent) for whom wives, and sisters, and mothers, often do sacrifice their all. Then her father's death left her homeless, and she lived with an aunt, who was a match-maker. But Honor did not like match-making; so she came here: a blessing wherever she goes! I should miss her almost as much as Katy."

The next morning brought Mr. Osborne and the marriage settlements, but no Mr. Langhton. His partner, however, assured Lord Delancy that he might rely on seeing him with the money by ten o'clock the succeeding forenoon, when the deeds were to be signed, and the money at once paid to Sir Vivian, to whom and to whose

solicitor formal notice to that effect had been given. This was driving matters fearfully close; but Mr. Langhton had never yet failed, Mr. Osborne asserted, in a business appointment, and would certainly not begin his short-comings with a client whom he so much respected, a friend whom he so much loved. The reason assigned for the delay was the receipt of a large sum of the Strange effects, which was to be paid late that evening. He was also to bring a special license.

Accordingly, the gentlemen were closeted all the morning, reading over the settlements at their absent friend's request. Lord Delancy's composure surprised his son; who, indeed, showed more anxiety on his account than he did.

The ladies had agreed to take an early dinner at the Hall, and spend the afternoon in fishing on the mere. But only Mrs. Bell and her daughter arrived. Mrs.

Warner had been a little shaken by the after-shock of yesterday's alarm, and Honor stayed to take care of her.

Between six and seven these two friends were seated together in an arbour, where lilac and acacia, the wandering clematis, and the tasselled lime gave fragrance the whole summer through. At this moment, however, a profusion of honeysuckles, straggling and twisting amongst them all, shed their unrivalled perfume upon the air, beginning to emit their délicious odours just as the sun declines and the dew rises. In front of the arbour a broad turf-walk led to the house, bordered on either side by a row of pinks, alternately white and red, backed up by clumps of white rocket, double July-flowers and fraxinella, and these again by moss-roses, white lilies, and sweet peas. Behind them nicely trained espaliers formed a verdant wall, concealing a kitchen garden, which, if

it had existed in our days, would have carried off half the prizes in the country. That kitchen garden was the pride of old Joseph's heart.

He, however, was away in the hay-field. It was his little grandson Jacob, who had just deposited upon the tea-table, at which Honor was officiating, a plate of strawberries, real hautbois, which he declared could not be matched at the Hall. They came from Miss Katy's own garden, and he had been sent from the lake on purpose to gather them for her grandmamma and Miss Honor. "Miss Katy," Jacob said, "had had a great mind to come herself; but the Major had been answerable for his choosing the best, and said he might be trusted. He liked the Major. Should he say the strawberries were good?"

"Excellent! Jacob. Grandmamma's kindest love," said Honor.

Jacob turned to go, and at the side of the path stood Lord Delancy.

"There is no mischief, dear Mrs. Warner? No accident," said he, giving Jacob a kind parting tap. "I am not a herald of ill fortune. But, having been engaged all the morning with important papers, and unable to get here, I could not satisfy myself without ascertaining in person that you have not suffered from the agitation of hearing of our late sad adventure, and that she whose danger caused us all so much alarm has recovered the physical ill effects of such peril. We saw yesterday, that, perfect as was her self-command in the hour of struggle, her strength gave way when the demand for it had passed."

"Oh, my lord!" said Honor, "do not speak so kindly, or I shall give way again. There are some voices whose sympathy goes straight to the heart. Your goodness would overset me quite."

"Well, you and Mrs. Warner must give

me some tea," replied he cheerfully, as Rachel and her followers appeared in the walk with the bright copper tea-kettle and the whole apparatus; "and then, with her leave, we will have a little talk."

Nowhere is the meal so dear to woman, the English tea eaten in such perfection, as at an old-fashioned farm-house. The thick, fresh cream, the newly-churned butter, the home-baked bread, the home-made cakes, and the female ministry, in the sweet evening air, perfumed with flowers and with the passage of heavy waggons loaded with hay—all made it a feast of country luxuries; yet, even with the addition of Katy's strawberries, the meal passed away almost untasted.

Nearly at the same moment with her serving-maidens, Mrs. Warner retired to the house; making a pretext of putting in water a white rose, in which she had found the earliest golden beetle of the year.

Katy loved to look at those glittering green wings, and then to return the pretty insect unharmed to its tree.

"You stay there, my dear," was her parting injunction. So, very calm and very pale, Honor stayed.

Paler and less calm, Lord Delancy stood before her.

"I come to you, a culprit, Miss Clive; —nay; hear me out, dear Honor! I know that you desire none of these confessions, but it is a comfort to me to pour them forth. When, between five and six years ago, my son, then a very young man, made acquaintance with your accomplished brother, one of the most promising officers in the service, I was delighted to promote in every way I could, an intimacy which so thoroughly commanded my approbation. They visited me together at Delancy Castle, and at my house in town; and I travelled with them in Switzerland,

Germany, and Italy; never separating, in short, until the war which terminated at Waterloo recalled the young men to their respective regiments, whilst I myself returned to England almost as much attached to Lionel Clive as to my own Arthur. Little did either divine that a few short months would cause me to repent that intimacy; that the chance which threw my son into the same town with Lionel's father and sister—already predisposed to be his friends, from the friendship which united him with their son and brother—should change all my feelings towards the family. But already, although I dared not own it even to myself, I felt—I knew, that the fatal suit on which all our fortunes were staked was virtually lost; and that, in marrying a girl of high family and small portion, Arthur was insuring misery to himself and to her. I found all my fears verified when I heard from Lady Cardonnel that, for the

first time in his life, he loved a woman worthy of him in every sense of the word. I told her (what indeed she already guessed) how matters stood with me; and her next letter brought the unexpected tidings that Arthur had sought your hand and had been rejected. When my son returned to England this subject was never mentioned. Then came successive blows upon your house and mine; the death of poor Lionel, followed so rapidly by that of Colonel Clive; the loss of this law-suit, and the discovery of the real mortgagee. In these miserable money anxieties every generous feeling seems to die; and this passage of Arthur's life was forgotten like a dream; until, most unexpectedly, I found Miss Clive in the governess of the young girl — the very sweet young girl (let me do her no injustice!) whom circumstances had induced me to select as my future daughter-in-law. The name, the

christian name, the face and voice so like poor Lionel, and, more than all, the averted looks of Arthur, convinced me that I saw indeed the Honor Clive whom he had so loved."

Here Honor broke in—"Nay; now, my lord, hear me, and believe me, I conjure you, when I say that, strange as it seems, I never heard the name of Atherton in conjunction with yours; nor ever, till we were at the gates of this house, heard Lord Delancy mentioned as the landlord of Mrs. Warner. Then, Mr. Langhton can tell you how earnestly I entreated him to return."

"He has told me so," said Lord Delancy. "I know that you were ignorant of the connexion."

"Without confessing all that had passed," continued she, "I felt that I could not convey to Mr. Langhton the strong motives that prompted my desire to return. I submitted therefore to enter the family,

and to incur the risk of a suspicion, which I rejoice to find is now swept away from your lordship's mind. And, indeed, except the grief of seeing my dear brother's friends so cold to his poor sister (and that is over now), what harm has been done? Major Delancy, except in one generous expression of regret to see me in a dependant situation, has never breathed a word which could imply a recollection of our former acquaintance; and when to-morrow he carries away as his bride that sweetest child of all the earth, fresh and pure as one of her own roses, he will not, I think, find her the worse for the six months that we have spent together in sisterly love."

"Honor!" said Lord Delancy, "I come to say to you that I repent not only of my sins towards you (those, I see, that you have forgiven), but of my deep wrongs towards Arthur and towards myself. I have been

carried away by many passions, all of them evil,—by pride, by hatred, by an inordinate love of station and position, and an inordinate worship of my own family. Partly, too, I have been led astray by sins that hide themselves in fairer names,—by a devotion to art as it lives in splendid mansions, and in great collections,—by a love of science and of learning, as seen in great libraries,—of fine scenery as shown in drest gardens: as if beauty were not as general as the blue sky and the green earth!—as if the best books were not also the commonest!—as if home were not as dear in the cottage as in the palace! The one thing, Honor, that cannot be supplied is love. It is my firm belief that Arthur's affections are still yours; and I come to you to lay his fate and mine at your feet. Let this mercenary marriage be broken off. Let us go forth poor and happy. There will still be something left. The Commander-in-

Chief knew and prized your father—knows and prizes Arthur. I shall not be too proud to share a soldier's home; and if I have seemed proud and stern to you, Honor, only consent to be my daughter, and you shall find how well your father will pay his long debt of love."

Honor leaned her head on her hands. Perhaps she prayed for power to resist what was, indeed, a sore temptation. If so, her prayer was granted. She looked up with gentle composure.

"My dear lord," she said, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for a goodness and a confidence which will be a comfort to me as long as I live. But this which you propose must not be. These dear and excellent women who have behaved so nobly and so trustingly must not be abandoned. Strong, indeed, must have been your determination to sacrifice your own wishes and your own interests to the

fancied wishes of your son, when it caused you to forget that your honour and his are pledged to Katy, and to those who have influenced her in this engagement. Be assured that Major Delancy would not allow such a sacrifice. Be certain also, that no happiness could follow an union so brought about. He will find, as we all find, that the only true felicity is in the path of duty. He and that sweetest girl will depart to-morrow for the Continent—she looking to him for every act and word. Think how that will endear her to one so kind and generous as Arthur! As for me, I shall only have too many homes! Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Osborne, Lady Cardonnel, Mr. Langhton, my own relations, are all earnest in invitations; and your lordship will see, before many years are passed, that I shall be amongst your own guests at Atherton, with no other feeling on any side than that of the sincerest friendship."

CHAPTER XVII.

A WEDDING MORNING.

THE next morning there was not a cloud in the sky, hardly a breeze to wave the uncut grass in the upland pastures: never was dawn so lovely as that which ushered in the wedding-day of the heir of Atherton and his blooming bride.

It had need be pregnant with good omens, that busy morning, when, be the marriage private as it may, so much of the outward and the frivolous is mingled strangely and jarringly with the deepest emotions, with trembling hope and lurk-

ing fear. Ah, those orange-blossoms! those Brussels veils! how often have they overhung tearful eyes and pallid cheeks! Taken at the very best, say that affection have presided over the union, let friends consent and fortune smile—even then what a wrench it is from old habits, old homes, and old affections. That bridegroom had need be very dear for whose sake the beloved resigns the companions of her whole maiden life, the familiar household names, the every-day sights and sounds, the thousand cherished associations, of which the full charm is never felt till they are lost.

With Katy it was a more than ordinary plunge. She left not only the dear home of which she had been the delight, but the safe and happy station in which she had been reared;—that station too low for pride, too affluent for want, full of healthy occupation, and exempt from

all restraint except that of womanly propriety, which is perhaps amongst the most blessed upon earth. She was to return to Atherton, but she left for ever the Great Farm. Poor Katy!

It seemed as if until that morning she had never fully realized her position. She hung round her mother's neck; she clung to her grandmother's knees; she poured forth floods of tears on Honor's bosom. It is quite certain that she hugged old Rachel, Flora, Marigold, Britomarte, and the pony; it is not quite certain that she did not hug Jacob Stokes.

The first drop of consolation came from that young gentleman:

"Never mind me, Miss Katy! Don't take leave of me, I'm going too," cried Jacob. "Don't you see how fine I am? I'm to be your page, or whatever you choose to make of me, and Britomarte and Marigold are to follow with the Major's

horses. That was settled last night in the boat. The Major asked me how you liked your new maid, and whether I thought you had a fancy for any more of your old people. Bless you, Miss Katy, you may carry away half Atherton if you like. He and the old Lord think of nothing but making you happy — just look at my jacket?"

Katy turned him round and round; admired the silver filligree buttons; thought how kind it was to take with her the things she had been used to at home; wiped away her tears, and was comforted.

Mr. Langhton's non-arrival the night before had rendered it necessary (as has been said elsewhere) to transact on that very wedding morning the formal official business of the redemption of the title-deeds. He had written in the clearest manner to Lord Delancy that he should ar-

rive at ten o'clock; that the settlements should then be signed, the money paid, and the young couple married. The Delancy Arms was the spot fixed upon for redeeming the securities, and none who knew Mr. Langhton could allow themselves to doubt of his being there in time.

Accordingly the party from the Hall, and Dr. Glenham, met at nine o'clock at the farm, the bridegroom bringing no other present to the flower-loving girl than a nosegay of such as she loved best. They suited well her delicate dress; and the beauty which, enhanced by sensibility, seemed more winning than ever.

Mr. Osborne had brought with him the unsigned settlements, which lay on a table at one end of the old stone hall, where the breakfast was set out, and the company assembled. They proceeded to discuss the viands, partly, as the lawyer observed, to save time, partly to beguile by any sort of

occupation the hour that would probably elapse before the arrival of the guardian, without whose presence all these preparations would be vain.

The breakfast was silent and sad. A doubt, for which they would have found it difficult to account, had crept upon most of the party.

Mr. Osborne, who would have gone to the stake upon his partner's good faith, and who was besides better acquainted than the rest with the cause of his absence, began to count up the possible impediments to his return.

His wife even more reliant upon Stephen, and quite ignorant of the eventualities which alarmed her husband, began seriously to suspect that Sir Vivian (of whom she had pretty much the notion that a child has of some bad genius in an Eastern Tale) might have waylaid and murdered their admirable friend.

Dr. Glenham, remembering his recent visit, thought he had found some more supple agent, innkeeper or postilion, to drive the good lawyer in a wrong direction, or to overturn the chaise.

Lady Cardonnel, accustomed to her brother-in-law's ill fortune, thought that some new stroke of fate had interposed to prevent the clearance of his property.

The mother and grandmother, now that the trying moment approached, thought only of the grief of parting, and rejoiced in every delay.

Major Delancy looked at the two girls as they sate in silence side by side, and hand in hand, and felt that the sacrifice must be made, and would probably be made in vain.

His father was calm. It seemed as if his anxiety was only for his son; and that the rescue of his ancestral property from his treacherous kinsman had become a secondary object.

Ten o'clock struck. It was heard first from a pretty French time-piece, on the mantel-piece, a present from Lady Cardonnel; then from the old house clock in the kitchen; then from the church tower; then from the great turret clock at the Hall.

"These country clocks are never right," said Mr. Osborne; "I set my watch yesterday by the Horse Guards."

On consulting that watch it told the same tale; so did the watches of the other gentlemen; so did the old sundial which Honor ran to examine.

It seemed as if the charm of Mr. Langhton's punctuality was broken. He had fixed a certain hour; that hour was passed, and he had not arrived. Nobody blamed him. They who loved the good lawyer, which included everybody present, began, some loudly and some silently, to entertain the most unreasonable fears for his safety.

"Can Sir Vivian have petitioned the

Chancellor to make Katy a ward of the court?" enquired Dr. Glenham of Mr. Osborne.

"The Chancellor is cognizant of the matter," was the reply.

"Has any one heard of Sir Vivian to-day or yesterday?" asked Major Delancy.

"I saw him with two other gentlemen at the Delancy Arms, as I came up the village," said the Rector.

Time crept on. The minute hand advanced upon the clock; the shadow traversed the old sundial; and eleven was heard tinkling from the little French time-piece, jangling loudly from the kitchen, and pealing in deep tones, softened by distance, from the church tower and the Hall.

The suspense now became intolerable. Again, for the twentieth time, Mr. Osborne walked into the court to look or listen for the expected carriage.

"Don't you think," enquired Dr. Glen-

ham, when he returned again unsuccessful; "does not it seem to you better that the settlements should be signed? Mr. Langhton will then have only to glance at the signatures, and carry the money at once to the mortgagee.

A momentary pause ensued, agitated and agitating. The lawyer made no reply.

"Surely it will be best," said Lady Cardonnel. "Arthur! Katy!"

Major Delancy advanced to lead his fair bride to the table, but all on a sudden Katy escaped from his hands, and flung herself at her grandmother's feet.

"Grandmamma! dear grandmamma! Major Delancy does not love me! How should he, poor ignorant child that I am? He does not love me, and he does love dear Honor. He does not say so. He will not say so. But I know it. I feel it. Aye!" said she, in a lower voice, "and

Honor loves him. I always thought so, I don't know why; and perhaps I ought not to say such a thing. But I am sure of it. Only see how she is crying at this moment. And look at him. And look at dear Lord Delancy. They love each other, and it has been that thought which has kept me from the feeling which would otherwise have made me so unhappy now. Listen! Grandmamma. One half of this money will pay off these mortgages. Let dear Honor have it as if she were really my sister; and let her marry Major Delancy; and let me stay with mamma and you. I shall be as happy as the day is long, when Honor is happy too; and let her live at the Hall, and come and see us every day. What could we do without Honor? How could we be happy if we made her miserable? Let Arthur and Honor have this money, dear grandmamma!"

"Oh! that I could, my Katy!" said

Mrs. Warner, her venerable head shaking more than ever. "But you are a minor, my child, and till you are of age we can do nothing."

"Ah!" said Katy, "I am sure Mr. Langhton can manage it; and here he is, thank Heaven!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIGNING THE SETTLEMENTS.

"Oh! Mr. Langhton, you are come just in time," continued Katy, whose impetuosity had borne down all interruption, flying to meet him, and clinging to his arm.

"Quite in time," replied he, smiling, and flinging down a great blue bag heavy with parchments. "These are the title-deeds, and you are free."

"But listen to me, Mr. Langhton," persisted Katy. "Honor must have half of this money—more than half, three parts. Now listen," said she, almost in a whisper,

"Major Delancy does not want to marry me, indeed he does not; and I do not want to marry him or anybody; I am too young. Let me live with mamma and grandmamma here in my dear old home, and give her the money, and make everybody happy; now, do!"

"Stop a moment Katy; nobody shall marry you against your will, my queen," said Mr. Langhton. "Be content, Mrs. Warner, all will go well; only let me tell my good lord here that he is his own man again; every estate freed; galleries, collections, libraries, all: he has but one creditor, and she will not be a hard one."

"But, dear Langhton," said Lord Delancy, "you cannot imagine, even if it were possible, that we are capable of taking advantage of this sweet child's proposal; I answer for my son as for myself; aye, and I answer for another; Honor would not let us if we were so

base." His son and Honor pressed each a hand.

"Have patience for an instant," said our friend Stephen. "Of course, Osborne, you guessed that I was detained in crossing from Dublin. We had head-winds all the way. I promise you I had a race for it. However, I brought down half-a dozen undeniable witnesses; had half-an-hour to spare by the clock and by the sun; and the thing is settled for ever by their own admission."

One word in this speech in spite of its peculiar interest had arrested general attention, and "From Dublin!" burst from several voices.

"Yes, from Dublin," resumed the lawyer. "You have left the name blank in the settlement as I told you?" said he to his partner. "Yes, I see you have. Well, now, good folk, sit down, and I will satisfy your

curiosity. Sit down, everybody. And you, Honor, be pleased to listen. Do you remember a little old prayer-book which had belonged to your grandmother, Lady Rossborough, the famous beauty, and some letters of her writing, which I craved permission to read? Well, that little prayer-book had on the fly-leaf a name and a date written in yellow faded ink, the maiden name, as you told me, of your grandmother, the second wife of your grandfather, the Earl of Rossborough. Now it so happened that I had been searching after this very name for five or six months; searching, I think, all over England, amongst churchyards and parish registers, and registers of all sorts, except just the Peerage. Now, I recognised at a glance the handwriting of that inscription, and the initials of the donor; also, I recognised the character of the packet of old letters. I said nothing to you then, because there

were still a good many points to verify and make clear, not only to my own satisfaction, but to that of certain sages learned in the law; amongst the rest to the Lord High Chancellor. Early this morning all was settled. I took care to have Sir Vivian's money ready before. And when I tell you, my dear lord, and you, Mrs. Warner, that the name was Elizabeth Brown of Weston, near Southampton; that the letters were in her character; and that the words on the fly-leaf were in the handwriting of Richard Strange; in short, that our fair friend Honora Clive is the only surviving child of her only daughter, and the actual heir to the moiety of the assets of the said Richard Strange; the missing legatee for whom I have been seeking;—why I think you will admit that my precaution of leaving the name blank in the settlements was by no means superfluous."

The conclusion, not so logical as the usual deductions of our clear-headed friend, was received in almost total silence. The good lawyer tapped his snuff-box, drew himself up, and muttered, half unconsciously, the words of Prospero :—

"'So glad of this as they I cannot be;
——————But my content
At nothing can be more.'"

He finished by kissing Honor's forehead, who hid her blushing face upon his shoulder.

Mrs. Warner, more moved by joy than by the distress in which she had borne so true a part, folded her hands in mute thankfulness. Mrs. Bell cried out triumphantly:

"I knew it! I was sure of it! I was always certain that Honor would turn out to belong to us somehow or other."

Whilst Katy, laughing, crying, and singing in a breath, skipped round the

room in an ecstacy, and finally flung herself into Mr. Langhton's arms.

Those most concerned, however, father and son, seemed spell-bound. Lady Cardonnel came to their relief.

"Tell us, Mr. Langhton, how came it that the tough, withered heart of this miser, the modern Midas, who turned all he touched into gold, was softened even by the matchless beauty of Lady Rossborough? Where did he meet with her? I have heard my own Irish godfather boast of her as turning every head in Dublin fifty years ago. But he always claimed her as a countrywoman; an Irish Browne."

"No, English," replied Stephen. "It is the one bit of poetry in a miser's life, inasmuch as true passion is always poetry. Looking over the securities left by Richard Strange, I found, just after the discovery of the prayer-book, a note

almost written over by accounts, which explained some of the facts of the story, and guided me to the locality. Lady Rossborough, then Elizabeth Brown, lived with her father, a half-pay lieutenant, in the pretty hamlet of Weston, on the Southampton Water, catching the breath of the salt sea, as your old sailor loves to do. Richard Strange, then about five-and-thirty, went there after a long illness for health and cheapness. He had already laid the foundation of his fortune; and offered settlements to his fair enslaver which might have tempted a richer maiden. She refused his hand, but that his heart remained with her this legacy sufficiently proves. And now, Honor, tell me, did I do well in applying a part of your money to pay off Sir Vivian? I never in my life saw a man so unwilling to receive a bundle of bank-bills. Was I wrong, I say?"

"Oh, Mr. Langhton!"

"Because, if I were, the estates can still be charged with the sum. It is not a bad investment."

"Oh, Mr. Langhton!" said Honor; "dear, dear friend, you are breaking my heart. Lord Delancy, it was only last night that you offered—that you wished—Even if Major Delancy should still resent what passed three years ago, you surely will not disdain to think of me as poor Lionel's sister; as one to whom this money can bring no pleasure, no comfort in the world, unless you will condescend to use it?"

"My daughter! my dear, dear daughter!" said Lord Delancy, folding her in his arms; "we cannot take the money without a far more precious gift."

"But he has not said he loves me," faintly whispered the heiress.

"Honora! my own Honora! my first and only love!" exclaimed Arthur. And

Lord Delancy, with a fervent blessing, placed her trembling hand within his son's; nor even in that moment of ecstacy was Katy forgotten.

"Well," said Mr. Langhton half-an-hour after, when the name of Honora Clive had been inserted in the blanks left in the settlement, and that important document, duly signed and witnessed, had been safely consigned to the keeping of the blue bag, "Well, it is some comfort to think that so excellent a specimen of engrossing will not be thrown away. I hate to see good sheep-skin wasted. And there was some danger here, I promise you; for as Honor refused to marry Major Delancy when she was poor, and he hesitated at marrying her because she became rich, and Katy would have nothing to say to him at any rate, a marriage settlement seemed as sheer a superfluity as the money

which Sir Vivian brought down to pay the bell-ringers and treat the parish on taking possession of Atherton Hall. We'll ring the bells next week to another guess tune. And half a dozen years hence we'll have another bell-ringing and another wedding-day. Yes, my queen! you may make sure of that; for if nobody else will have you, I'll marry you myself. In the meanwhile you shall stay here at Atherton, according to your desire, with the dear mamma and the dear grandmamma; coddling all the old women in the village, nursing all the children, riding Britomarte, stuffing Flora, and spoiling everybody, especially Marigold and Jacob Stokes."

END OF VOL. I.

M. S. MYERS, PRINTER TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

ATHERTON,

AND

OTHER TALES.

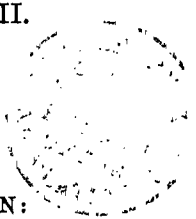
BY

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

AUTHOR OF "OUR VILLAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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DOLLY AND HER BEAUX.

SEVERAL years ago, I spent some months with a near and dear relation, whom I shall call General Vernon, and his no less charming wife, the Lady Anne, at their fine place in the North of England. They had a large and lovely family of boys, from 18 years old to 8, some at Eton, some at a military school, and one already in

the army: and of girls from 15 downwards, all at home; the elder ones under the care of an accomplished governess, and the youngest, a fairy of three-and-a-half (three-and-sixpence, as her father used to say, when the little lass's age came under discussion), who not yet subjected to the discipline of the school-room, and quite weary of the large, dull, deserted nursery, and the good old family nurse, Mrs. Hicks (I believe she had brought up three generations of the Vernon's), a tun of a woman, who sate in state in a great easy arm chair, grumbling over her corns and her rheumatism,—used to escape as often as possible to the gayer parts of the mansion; a privileged and most welcome intruder, whose merry voice might be heard singing through hall and gallery the moment you entered the door, and found indeed an almost infallible guide as to which part of the house, the library

for instance, or the drawing-room, happened to be that in which the greater part of the family was assembled. Wherever most people were assembled and most fun going forward; wherever, in short, there was most noise, there, heightening, redoubling and provoking the din, was, you may be sure, Miss Dolly.

Dolly, whose real name, by the way, was Dora, though it is doubtful whether she had been so addressed since the christening; the very maids—even Mrs. Hicks herself, calling her Miss Dolly. Dolly was a nice little girl: small of her age, but well formed and active, with abundance of flaxen ringlets, blue eyes, and a pink and white complexion, not much unlike her own great wax doll, and not very much larger, the chief difference between them consisting in the absence of noise and motion on the doll's part, wherein Dolly had the advantage, and in the far superior

neatness of the waxen lady's apparel: neither Mrs. Hicks, nor her aide-de-camp, Patty (the nursery maid) being able to keep Dolly tidy, though they tried hard, after their several fashions, to achieve that most laudable object. Mrs. Hicks hoping, lamenting, and sighing in her great chair, over torn frocks and tattered trowsers; whilst Patty chased her young mistress, needle in hand, running up tucks, sewing on strings, and tying sashes; all of which might truly be called labour in vain, for Dolly was a romp at heart, a romp in grain, and it would be as easy to wash a blackamoor white as to preserve cleanliness and order in the person of a young lady who labours under that unlucky propensity.

Dolly (I am sorry to give so bad a character to my heroine) was a most inveterate romp. She romped with her brothers and sisters wherever she met with them; with her father and mother whenever she

could coax them into the sport; with Miss Harris, the governess; with Patty, the nursery maid; and, finally, notwithstanding corns and the rheumatism, with Mrs. Hicks herself, who, in spite of a considerable degree of gravity, mental and bodily, and a decided theoretical objection to such rudeness, could not always find in her heart to resist Dolly's practical temptation, especially when Dolly climbed to the top of her great chair, and stole the very spectacles from off her nose.

This was the signal for a game of play, which used to last till poor fat Mrs. Hicks, tired as ever a poor fat Mrs. Hicks was before, was forced to give in and cry for quarter: and then Dolly (who seldom attacked Mrs. Hicks until she had exhausted the patience of her other biped play-fellows) used to resort to the quadrupeds of the house—her mamma's lap-dog, her papa's poodle, her sister's kitten,

Miss Harris's cat, and a much enduring terrier of her own, called Tiny, for amusement and consolation; and they, especially Tiny and the kitten, would enter into her glee, and jump and frisk about, and scratch and tear the clothes upon her back, and make such a commotion as would have wearied anybody under the sun except Dolly; but Dolly was untirable. It was perfectly wonderful how much fatigue, under the name of play, that little person could endure—from sunrise to sundown she was in perpetual motion. Miss Harris (who dreaded her coming into the schoolroom) used to declare that it made her head ache only to look at her!

Besides being a romp, Dolly (the sins are apt to go together in damsels under four years old) was, I am sorry to say, a most desperate flirt. She had early made the discovery that gentlemen, who have no bonnets to discompose, nor gowns to

rumple, make far better play-fellows than ladies who have their millinery and petticoats to take care of, and are, besides, less strong in the arm, and therefore less capable of giving, what Dolly liked better than anything, a good high toss. Gentlemen were, therefore, her decided favourites; and every male visitor, who came to the house, was sure of being challenged to a game of romps with Miss Dolly. But, besides these chance beaux, she had, nearly from the time she could talk, a regular flirtation on hand with some favourite of the house.

First on the list was Mr. Simon Bates, the house steward; a retainer of the family of somewhere about Mrs. Hicks' standing, for whom in his youth he had been suspected of a lurking *penchant*, and for whom he still retained sufficient partiality to induce him to pay her long and frequent visits in the nursery, when his flirtation

with Miss Dolly commenced. It did not last long. Poor Mr. Simon Bates, besides being nearly as unwieldy as Mrs. Hicks, was subject to fits of the gout, which utterly incapacitated him from the active gambols that his young lady required, so he relinquished his post, or she turned him off (either version may serve) as speedily as possible.

His successor was Mr. Jackson the butler, whose pantry, abutting on the great stairs, threw him frequently in Dolly's way, and enabled him to give her two exercises of which she was exceedingly fond—sliding down the banisters, and trotting round the hall on horseback, Mr. Jackson performing the part of a steed, and prancing and curvetting on hands and feet for her gratification. What added to her pleasure in this sport was Jackson's being furnished with a natural bridle, in the shape of a pig-tail, he being of the old-

fashioned race of butlers, with a red face blazing amidst his frizzed and powdered hair—silk stockings, paste buckles, and, on state occasions, an embroidered waistcoat with long flaps, which some former head of the Vernons had worn at court. A capital steed, Dolly, in her lisping English, was pleased to call him "vely nithe horthe;" but, notwithstanding his alacrity in moving on all-fours, poor Mr. Jackson's red nose was fated to be put out of joint even sooner than that of his predecessor, Mr. Bates.

The favourite by whom the galloping butler was superseded, was a certain Eugene Prince, or, as his comrades called him, Prince Eugene, who accompanied Harry Vernon home from the Military College, one Christmas holidays. Prince Eugene was exactly the person to worry a young lady off her feet; bold, active, lively, and good humoured, and blest with

such a fund of animal spirits that he could even tire down Dolly herself. Prince Eugene was irresistible; he tossed her over his head, he shook her into penny pieces, he called her his little wife, he sang songs, made faces, and played Punch for her amusement; and reigned without a rival, whether on four feet or on two. But, alas! the Christmas hours do not last for ever. Prince Eugene departed, and poor Dolly was left a disconsolate damsel, to seek another play-fellow as best she might.

She found, or rather made one, in the shape of the vicar of the parish; a grave, decorous, respectable, Mr. Harman, who at first sight seemed an unpromising subject for a romping bout. But the gentleman had more fun in him than he seemed to have; and being much at the house, and amused by the manner in which Dolly forced herself upon his attention, and in-

sisted on his tossing her up to the ceiling, and shaking her into penny pieces, and calling her his little wife, like her "poor dear Printh," he took very greatly to the office, and, on my arrival at General Vernon's, I found him as regularly romping with Dolly after dinner, as saying grace before.

This state of things did not last long; Dolly was, as I have said, a flirt as well as a romp; and an occasion soon presented itself for displaying her unlucky quality in full perfection. It came, as usual, in the form of a rival.

The time of my visit happened to be on the eve of a general election; and a few days after my arrival, a fellow guest made his appearance in the shape of a young baronet, who was a candidate for the representation of the next town, where the Vernons had great interest. A very agreeable person was Sir Robert,—cheerful,

pliant, and good humoured, and so overflowing with civility, that he made his court to every creature in the house, from Lady Ann, the really lovely eldest daughter, down to Finette and Tiny. Of course Dolly was not overlooked. He out-tossed and out-shook Mr. Harman; made more faces and sang more songs than Prince Eugene; played Punch twice over; galloped on all fours three times round the great drawing-room; declared that she should be nobody's wife but his; and finally, promised to carry her away with him the next morning.

The night had been stormy, and Mr. Harman had, as was frequently the case in bad weather, slept at the great house; and the morning being brilliantly fine, we were all assembled to witness the departure of the two gentlemen—the one on foot to the vicarage, the other on horseback to the independent borough of

G——, when, to our great astonishment, Dolly marched into the hall, equipped in her best pelisse and bonnet, with a huge wax doll in one hand, and a coach and four with their outriders (the gift of Mr. Harman,) in the other. "Thtop!" shouted Dolly, perceiving that her new admirer, who was already mounted, was bowing himself off as fast as possible, "thtop! I go too!"

"No," rejoined the faithless swain, "not now, dear Dolly; there's no room; you see I'm on horseback: I'll come back in a carriage and fetch you and your doll. I'll come back for you to-morrow, Dolly."

"I go *now*," screamed Dolly. "I ride before—I ride behind. I oor wife!" quoth Dolly. But all in vain, for her treacherous admirer nodded, and kissed his hand, and galloped off; he laughed and he rode away, and poor Dolly, quite

astounded at anybody's being as fickle as herself, seemed likely to cry, till, catching a glimpse of Mr. Harman, who was now, in his turn, taking leave, she resumed her doll and her coach-and-four, which she had put down in her consternation, and then said very quietly, — "Well, then, Mither Harman, I go with oo."

"No," rejoined Mr. Harman, "not to-day, Miss Dolly. I'll come and fetch you another time;" and off he bowed himself; and poor Dolly, quite astounded with this great moral lesson on the dangers of flirtation, and the treachery of men, walked back to the nursery quite misanthropic, exclaiming, with the drollest possible union of mirth, of observation, and falseness of grammar, "Manth ith all alike!" she being, perhaps, the first young lady of three years and a half old, who ever had occasion, on her own ac-

count, to verify the words of the old song,—

"Sigh no more, ladies, ladies, sigh no more,—
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot on sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never."

"Manth ith all alike," quoth poor Dolly, and off she marched to play with Tiny.

MARION CAMPBELL.

A HIGHLAND STORY.

"This jealousy
Is for a precious creature."—SHAKSPEARE.

A MORE inquisitive race of dogs than the greyhound, breathes not upon this earth. Wanting the sense of smell which usually leads astray those four-footed people, who, like the best of the two-footed generation, have certain small and genial frailties mingled amongst their many virtues—lacking that temptation to step aside from the straight and beaten path, they indulge

their wandering propensities by poking their pretty noses into every crevice and cranny they can spy out, and following every indication of life or motion which their quick sense of seeing and hearing can detect on every side.

Many a dance has my lamented Mayflower led me, by her vagaries in this way; and, as greyhound nature will be greyhound nature under all varieties of coat or feature, I suspect that the fair Marion Campbell found her pet Luath—rough, wiry, bony, though he was, and of the sturdier and stronger sex—quite as unmanageable as I did my fair, sleek, delicate canine companion; although, in addition to all other points of difference, the good greyhound Mayflower happened to be a lady, and we all know that "the menfolk," as a country friend of mine is pleased disparagingly to designate that important part of the creation, are pleased to arro-

gate to themselves a total deficiency in the great quality of curiosity.

I do not see that we "women-folk" have any business to quarrel with this assertion. If they who go clad in doublet and hose choose to make over to the wearers of boddice and petticoat the exclusive possession of the great faculty, which may be called the very key to knowledge, I can find no reason why we should disclaim a distinction so honourable; except, indeed, the trifling consideration called truth, may count for anything in the argument; in which case, I should feel myself bound to declare, that, according to my limited observation, the quality in question is about as equally divided between the sexes, as freely and bountifully scattered amongst all animals with any pretensions to intelligence, whether biped or quadruped, as any—what shall we call it?—any questionable virtue well can be.

That this same organ of inquisitiveness was as strongly developed in Marion Campbell's rough and faithful attendant, as in my delicate pet, was made unpleasantly conscious to his fair mistress during a ramble which she, accompanied only by Luath and her damsel Janet, (whose functions about the daughter of the old Highland chief much resembled those of a modern lady's-maid,) was taking through her native glens, one fine morning in August.

Marion passed along in silence; wrapt, sooth to say—as, in the heyday of her bloom, woman, from the princess to the peasant, is wont—in "maiden meditation," which, in the presence at least, and, as I suspect, in a good many others, was, with all submission to the great poet, anything but "fancy free."

Marion Campbell's meditations glanced over her mind, mingling and crossing, now

bright and now gloomy, like the tartan of her house, to which, indeed, that checkered and many-coloured web, a young lady's musings, may not unaptly be likened.

First she thought of a new sacque and petticoat of pale lilac damask, flowered with alternate bouquets of roses and carnations, the most magnificent habiliment that had ever penetrated north of Inverary; and of a Mechlin head and ruffles, brought her in a present by her kinsman Archibald—Cousin Archie, as she used to call him, when they were children together—now a captain in Kingston's dragoons; then she repeated to herself certain rhymes of the ingenious Mr. Moore, (upon that thin diet did the lovers of poetry banquet in those days,) whose "Fables for the Female Sex," published a year or two before, had just found their way into the Highlands; then the form of a heather sprig suggested an apron that she was

flowering to wear with the above-mentioned damask suit; then she thought of her poor friend Helen Cameron, sister of the chief of Dungallan, whose proficiency in the mysteries of the needle had been acquired in a French convent, and who had taken so much pains to accomplish her in the gentle science of tent-stitch and cross-stitch; then the horrors of civil war, the much that she had heard, and the little that she had seen, of the last year's miseries, (for the ramble of which we are speaking occurred in the '46,) came shudderingly over her mind, as a cloud passes across the sun.

"Poor, poor Helen!" thought Marion, sighingly; "Archibald used to be jealous of Dungallan. He had little cause, Heaven knows. I never thought of him, except as the brother of my friend, whatever might be his wishes with regard to me; and now, if, indeed, he be still alive, he is

chased like the hill fox or the hare, and has nowhere to lay his head. Poor Dungallan! poor, poor Helen! Oh, the sickening horror of such a war as this has been!—kinsman with kinsman, friend with friend. And now this fearful search after a vanquished enemy!—this hunting down an old acquaintance, or, it may be, an honourable rival, like a beast of the field! Oh, to a brave spirit, it must be misery!" sighed Marion to herself, imputing, as a tender woman so often does impute, her own feelings to the man whom she loves. "Archibald must feel it so, in spite of his devotion to General Campbell (who has been as a father to him,) and his loyalty to King George. And now these fearful sentences!—that poor young girl who died of a broken heart at the execution of her lover!* They wring one's very

* Vide Shenstone's pathetic ballad of "Jamie Dowson;" a story so touching, that even the false taste of the versifier has failed to spoil it.

soul. But Archibald has leave of absence now, for the cure of that old wound at Culloden, and will remain with us during the whole autumn; and no fugitive would be mad enough to come into the Campbell's country. Then, in the winter, my father talks of taking me to Edinburgh." And the lilac damask, with alternate bouquets of roses and carnations, flitted before the eyes of the fair wearer. "No one knows what may happen in the winter!" thought she; and visions of snow-white satin night-gowns, and white and silver brocades, the bridal paraphernalia of the time, gleamed, for an instant, in her mind's eye, calling forth a blush and a smile, a look and a feeling of innocent hope, which banished for the moment, the recollection that such things as war and misery had ever existed in this world of sunshine and shadow.

These were the musings which the

pranks and vagaries of Luath had interrupted.

First, he was aware of the motion of a moor-fowl among the heather, and he darted up the hill side with the speed of an arrow, giving to his fair lady, and still more to her serving maiden—who exerted her lungs most womanfully for his recovery, screaming at the top of a naturally high voice until the rocks echoed back the sound as if it had been the shriek of a mountain eagle — giving to his fair pursuers the exceedingly tormenting and provoking spectacle of moving away the faster the more he was called back. Then a deer shewed himself in the valley, and off he darted through the glen, with a rush that threatened to run down the whole herd; while Janet's shrill pipe resounded through the uttermost depths of the glen, as it had before climbed the topmost ridge of the crags.

Then he contented himself with slighter deviations from the straight path, skipped from right to left, and from left to right, poking his nose into that nook and this cranny, until, at last, just as the bridal apparition had crossed Marion's fancy, he disappeared behind a small clump of brush-wood—two or three young birch trees, and a plant or two of yellow broom and Scotch brier that grew on the ledge of a cliff, down which, in winter, a mountain torrent made its way, and vanished bodily, or seemed to vanish, into the face of the rock.

The extraordinary disappearance of her favourite—followed as it was, first by a low sound from Luath, something between a bark and a growl, then by one or two muttered words, the speaker continuing invisible, and a slight noise of struggling—effectually aroused his fair mistress; who, naturally high-spirited, free-born, and

vigorous in mind and body, as becomes a mountain maid, plunged, without hesitation, into the stony bed of the torrent, now completely dried up by the summer sun; and, scrambling with considerable difficulty, (for the loose stones gave way even under her light tread, and she was forced to grasp every instant at the tufts of grass and heather that grew in the fissures of the cliff, and hung over its sides, to keep herself from falling,) succeeded, after some minutes' hard climbing, in gaining the position which her pet had reached at half a dozen bounds, and found herself perched upon a narrow ledge of rock overhanging the water-course, at about twenty feet from the bottom of the precipice; hardly wide enough to afford room to the little tuft of brushwood above which the cliff rose in a smooth, sheer ascent, until it seemed mingling with the clouds.

Behind this small clump of birch, and

broom, and briar, and now quite concealed by the summer foliage, was a small fissure, penetrating the natural mound, through which it was clear that Luath had disappeared, and into which she also passed, regardless alike of the dangers that she might encounter there, and of the warnings of Janet, who, climbing and remonstrating with equal good will, followed her lady as rapidly as a hearty tumble, which had unluckily befallen her at the commencement of her ascent, would permit.

A similar misadventure had very nearly occurred to her fair mistress, not aware, at the moment of her entrance, of the rapid shelving of the narrow passage into the cave in which it terminated. She recovered herself, however, and found, by the light which penetrated through the fissure, (the only light which the place afforded,) that she was in a natural cavern, of considerable extent, and immediately

confronted by a young man, who stood directly opposite to her, with an air and attitude of calm determination, one hand vigorously planted upon Luath's neck, and the other grasping a pistol which he had drawn from his belt.

Both were instantly relaxed as he perceived the sex of the intruder.

"A woman!" exclaimed he, replacing the pistol in his girdle, whilst Luath, in a transport of pleasure, sprang upon Marion's shoulder, and nestled his rough head against her cheek. "A lady! then I have nothing to fear." And, with a courtesy which seemed habitual, he dragged a block of smooth stone, the only thing resembling a seat which the cave afforded, to a level spot near his fair visitor, and entreated her to take possession of it, in an accent whose gentle cheerfulness contrasted singularly with his rude and squalid aspect.

Marion, complying with his request,

gazed upon him, as he stood before her, with a mixture of wonder and compassion. He was a tall young man, of a fair complexion, or rather a complexion which, before a long exposure to sun, and wind, and weather, had been fair; and a countenance which, in spite of a tremendous length of beard, had something at once singular and agreeable. He wore an old dark tartan coat, a plaid, and a philibeg, with a pistol and a dirk at his side. His garments were torn and dirty, his feet all but bare, and his whole appearance indicated the extremity of human privation.

"One of those unhappy sufferers!" thought Marion, as her bright eyes filled with tears. "So might my father and my poor cousin Archibald"—even in her silent thoughts, she did not call him by a tenderer name—"so might they have wandered in their enemy's country, and

have hidden in caves and rocks, had the day of Culloden ended differently."

"It is only my maid, sir — one for whose discretion I can answer," said Marion, aloud, as the entrance of Janet, and her exclamation of alarm and astonishment at sight of the stranger, produced a less emphatic expression of surprise on his part. "I will answer for her as for myself," said Marion, warmly.

"Heaven forbid that I should doubt of either!" responded the stranger. "Wherever, during my wanderings, I have met a woman, there I have been sure to find a friend. Pity and fidelity are synonymous with her name."

"How can we serve you?" said Marion, glancing towards the interior of the cave, where some heather, arranged with the blossoms upwards, the hardy couch of the Highlander, and the remains of a wood fire, gave token of a residence of some duration. You seem to want"——

"Almost everything, madam!" interrupted he, gaily. "For my wardrobe, you see its condition: witness my two feet, with half a brogue between them. Never was barefooted friar in fitter order for a pilgrimage. And as to my larder, that is reduced to a still lower ebb, as these few crumbs may bear testimony. I doubt if the leanest begging brother of St. Francis was ever so sparely furnished. I have been thinking, indeed, of making an onslaught upon your venison. I must have attempted it to-night, from sheer starvation, though the report of fire-arms"——

"Would bring upon you twenty armed men," rejoined Marion—"would produce instant discovery, perhaps instant death! Heaven be praised you refrained, and that Luath's curiosity led us here to supply your wants. If it had been my father!"

"Or if Captain Archibald had happened

to gang alang wi' Miss Marion the now, instead of me," interposed Janet—"whilk wasna unlikely, ye ken!"

"Hush, Janet!" resumed her mistress, blushing. "We have no time to waste in talk. They may miss us at home, and"—

"Eh! Miss Marion, but ye are richt!" exclaimed the incorrigible lady's maid. "The captain 'ill miss ye sure enoo, sae sune as he has dune thae weary letters. We hae nae time for clavers. He'll be seeking ye up the brae and doun the brae; and the loun Donald, the captain's man"—

"He'll be seeking after somebody else—will he not?" inquired the stranger, who had listened with an air of suppressed amusement, and sly, quiet intelligence, not a little provoking to the fair Marion, to the revelations of her waiting woman.

"He'll be following his master's good

example, and seeking up the brae and down the brae for you? Won't he, Mistress Janet?"

"Janet! hold your peace, I entreat you!" cried her lady, interrupting something that the chattering damsel was about to say, "Tell me, sir, and quickly, for the very moments are precious, how we can best serve you. With provisions, we can, I hope, supply you after dark."

"The tae half of a red deer pasty, sin' the gentleman fancies the meat, and a tass of whiskey, gin the loun Donald hae left sae mickle in the castle, for he's a fou frae morn till nicht," quoth Janet.

"Unless our prolonged absence should excite suspicion, there is little doubt but we shall be able to supply you with food. Linen and shoes also can be procured from my father's wardrobe. But I ought to tell you, inhospitable as it seems, that your continuance here is attended with

danger the most imminent. I feel that I am speaking to one of the unfortunate followers of the Pre—— of Charles Edward," continued she, checking herself, as her listener drew himself up proudly; "and it is right to inform him that he is in the very midst of Argyle's country, surrounded by enemies on all sides, parties of soldiers in every direction, and an officer in the service of the King—nay, this is no time to quarrel for a word with one who is risking much to preserve you—an officer in King George's service actually in the castle. What madness brought you hither? You must not, cannot remain here. The same accident that discovered your retreat to us, may make it known to others. And then——

The horrors of the executions at Kennington—an account of which, transmitted to her cousin by a friend from London, she had that morning overheard him reading to

her father—struck at once upon her mind. She thought of the young man before her, evidently well-born and delicately nurtured, who, for a wrong cause it might be, but still for one which he thought right, was enduring so cheerfully the extremity of human privation—she thought of him, to-day talking with her, full of life and spirit, to-morrow undergoing the fearful sentence at which her flesh had crept as she heard it; and unable to bear the image which her fancy had conjured up, she burst suddenly into a passion of tears.

Much affected by her sensibility, the object of her generous interest laid aside his levity and his haughtiness, and explained to her, simply and gravely, that, having been closely and unrelentingly pursued for many weeks, he had taken a sudden resolution to baffle, if possible, the sagacity of his enemies, by leaving the friendly country in which he had hitherto

taken refuge, and planting himself in the very stronghold of his foes. The actual spot in which he was concealed had been suggested, he said, by the local knowledge of a companion, who had left him on the double errand of obtaining important intelligence and recruiting their stock of provisions; but whose return, unless he himself prevented his arrival by meeting him at a rendezvous some twenty miles distant, he expected to take place two days after. This companion was, he added, no stranger to Miss Marion Campbell, whom he believed himself to have the honour of addressing, and to whom the house of Dungallan was certainly not unknown.

"Eh, puir Dungallan!" exclaimed Janet, whose sympathy extended to all her mistress's lovers. "We ken him weel, guid man! he gied me the vera brooch that ye see i' my pladdie, in return for an

auld gluve that he stealt of my leddy's forbye ither tokens. Puir Dungallan!—sae it was he that fand the cove! He kent the place langsyne, did Dungallan; frae the time that he was a bairn, nae higher than the hound Luath. An' ye look for him the morn's morrow! Eh, sirs, but we maun pit a ewe-milk cheese an' a wheen bannocks, to the pasty—he'll be just famished—to sae naething of anither tass of the whisky."

"Let him not come, I beseech you," said Marion, earnestly. "His danger would be ten-fold greater than yours. He is known. He is one of the chiefs of the Camerons—one of the principal planners of this unhappy insurrection; and said, also, to be a personal favourite of its unfortunate leader. I have known Dungallan all my life long. His sister was my early companion and instructress. Let me not have the misery of fearing that an

old friend of my father's house should be dragged from his lands to a dreadful death. If he were taken, nothing could save him. My interest in him would be misconstrued. It would be thought—Heaven knows how falsely!—but it would be thought"—proceeded Marion, in a low tone, and blushing deeply—"I know that it would be suspected. Only this very morning, when I spoke of poor Helen, the feeling burst forth. His presence, whilst my hot-headed kinsman is at the castle, would, indeed, be dangerous to us all."

"As fire to tow," corroborated Janet, "Guid sirs! I had clean forgot the captain. He's ganging gyte upon that score. He garred the soldier lads tak auld Alison —who's as deaf as the stanes in the linn —to Inverary, to be examined, because the auld wife had a wee bit mutch of Cameron tartan, that the guidman had picked up at Falkirk, to cover her puir

withered craig. No! no! — Dungallan maunna come hither. The captain wad jalouse that he was hereabout, by instinct, ye ken, just as Luath wad jalouse a brock or a tod by the mere effeck of natural anteepathy."

At this moment, the stranger—observing that Luath, who had hitherto stood quietly, and apparently half asleep, by the side of his mistress, pricked up his ears, and held his head slightly on one side, in the attitude of listening—laid his right hand firmly on his neck; and, in another instant, a quick step was heard in the glen below, succeeded by a loud, lively whistle, and a bold, manly voice calling, "Luath! Where are you, Luath, my man?" at short intervals. It was with considerable difficulty that the caresses of his lady, and the strong grasp of her companion, could restrain Luath from obeying the call. The footsteps were heard dashing through the loose, dry, gravelly bed of

the wintry torrent; pausing a moment, as if the passer by were observing the marks made by the girls in their recent ascent, or as if his attention were attracted by the suppressed growls of Luath, or his repeated plunges, as he struggled with all his strength to escape from his holders; and in that moment—a moment that seemed an age—both Marion and Janet fancied that he might have heard the quick beating of their throbbing hearts. At length the sound of the footsteps died away; and the voice and the whistle grew fainter and fainter, and were gradually lost in the distance. For the present, at least, the danger was past.

After a long pause, Janet ventured a whisper.

"Yon's Captain Archibald, calling Luath, puir fellow—be quiet, Luath, can't ye?—just to find whereabout Miss Marion may be. Eh, sirs!—there'd be wild wark, I trow, gin he and Dungallan should forgather!"

Their new acquaintance appeared to feel the full force of this observation.

"Well," said he, "I must, if possible, be off to-night. Heaven forbid that I should lead my faithful friend, or you, my kind protectress, into unnecessary danger! Supply me—if, without peril to yourselves you can do so—with so much of the commonest food as may give me strength for the journey, and a pair of shoes to guard my feet from the rocks and briars, and the tass of whisky which Mistress Janet spoke of, to drink your health and happiness—and I will set forth this very night."

"Ye ken the road?" inquired Janet.

"I have passed it once; and have learnt, in my wanderings, almost with the skill of a wild Indian, to fix in my memory the great landmarks of nature—the outlines of the mountains, the course of the streams, and the positions of the stars in the heavens; nay, even to follow

upon the trail of a companion, by the aid of almost imperceptible signs—a transverse cut upon the smooth bark of the mountain ash, a birch twig broken, a sprig of heather dropped upon the path — tokens which, even now that I have indicated them to you, none but an eye quickened by keen necessity and present danger could clearly apprehend. Oh, this necessity is the schoolmistress of all others, to sharpen observation, and teach a man the use of his wits! We may dwell in a palace all our lives, and not know for what purpose our senses were given us; but turn us, barefoot and hungry, amongst these Scottish wildernesses, and we soon find that the chief aim and object of our faculties is to enable us to make a shift—in which grand art of existence I'll challenge any canny Scot, Lowlander or Highlander, from John o'Groat's House to the Tweed. It will be moonlight to-night," added he,

more seriously, "and I have little doubt of finding my way to the place where I have appointed to join my friend. So now, my fair benefactress, I will detain you no longer."

And he took her hand, and bent his lips to it with an habitual grace and dignity; the effect of which was not at all diminished by his rude and squalid exterior, so independent of mere extrinsic circumstances are those qualities of mind and manner—that union of suavity and nobleness—which constitute a gentleman. Marion lingered.

"The night is, of all seasons, the most dangerous to a traveller, in these troubled times. Even the fact of being out in the dark exposes the wanderer to suspicion. Could no disguise be thought of that should enable you to elude suspicion by day?—a female garb, for instance?"

"The gentleman shall be welcome to

my best kirtle and boddice, and a hood and screen to the wale of it," quoth Janet. "Eh, and he'll mak a braw strappin lassie!"

"A woman!" replied the fugitive, quickly. "There you must excuse me. Anything but that. Braggart that I was, I forgot my failure in that line. I'll play the woman no more."

"No more!" And Marion gazed fixedly on his face, whilst a fresh suspicion crossed her mind, and the colour mounted even to her temples. "No more!"

"But he maunna leave the cave, by daylight, in a plaid and phillibeg of the Cameron set. Gin he does, the captain, or the loun Donald 'ill hoist him ahint a dragoon, and carry him awa to Inverary, like puir doited Alison. There's walth o' auld tartans about the town, belanging to ae laddie or anither; and I can lift him a suit as cannily as ever my forbears lifted a

drove o' black cattle," said Janet, laughing. "And then, when he has trimmed that beard o' his, whilk wad be as kenspeckle in a kilt as in a kirtle, he may pass for as douce a Campbell, honest man, as Lochleden himsel'."

"My father went this morning to a small hunting-lodge, and, having accidentally left Luath behind, one of the lads who attended him ran back to desire that, unless my cousin should follow him to-morrow—which it must be my care to prevent—the dog might be sent after him in the morning. Luckily, the messenger met Janet before arriving at the castle, and, after delivering his message to her, returned immediately to his master; so that, if your route, sir, should lie in that direction, or in whatsoever direction your route may lie—for it will be better for both of us that I should remain in my present ignorance—your safety will be

best assured by taking Luath, who is known to the whole country; and a note from myself to my father, which would be your warrant with any parties of the soldiery whom you might chance to meet. So soon as you shall be clear of present danger, set Luath free. He will speedily run home; and his appearance will be a token—a most welcome token—of your safety. Should you be taken, I rely upon your honour to declare my dear father's ignorance of this transaction. My own share in it I am ready to abide."

Once again, and with deep emotion, he for whose sake she was risking so much, and who felt that she was herself fully conscious of the peril which she incurred, lifted her hand to his lips, as she stood on the ledge of rock at the entrance of the cave, ready to attempt the precipitous descent.

"A poor and homeless fugitive thanks

you, madam. The result of a more fortunate attempt may one day enable him to return, in his own behalf, or in that of him whom he represents, some part of this obligation. When that time shall arrive, send but a leaf of this flower"——And he plucked a lingering blossom of the wild briar that straggled into the cave, and presented it to her.

Marion turned towards him with gentle dignity.

"God forbid that any wild and idle words should lessen the readiness and satisfaction with which I tender my poor assistance to an enemy in distress! But if any circumstance could diminish those feelings, it would be the finding him—even in this moment of extremest wretchedness, when the blood of his bravest friends is flowing like water, and the lives of weak and helpless women are perilled, by the endeavour to save him from a simi-

lar fate—looking forward, with exulting hope, to a renewal of these scenes of agony. Oh, sir! if you be, as your words import, of high and legitimate influence with him in whose name this expedition has been carried on, represent to him the utter desolation which it has brought upon this unhappy land! Warn him against incurring, for that thorny wreath, a crown, the tremendous responsibility of another such convulsions. Whatever be the abstract justice of his claim, the truest titles to a throne—the blessing of God, and the love of the people—rest with the House of Brunswick; and he and his gallant son will find a nobler greatness, a sweeter peace, in a patient acquiescence in the will of Providence and the voice of the nation, than in efforts which can but end in the slaughter of their bravest and their most faithful followers, and in rending asunder the ties of friendship and of kindred, from

the castle to the hut. Save this devoted country from the recurrence of scenes heart-rending alike to friend and to foe, and take with you my prayers and my blessings. Blushing at her own earnestness, she stopped suddenly. "I accept your flower," added she, in calmer tone, "not as an emblem—yet, see, the leaves are already falling!—but as a memorial. Janet and Luath shall be with you as soon as they can steal away after nightfall. Farewell!"

And, attended by her faithful adherents, she stepped into the narrow bed formed by the waters, and slowly and cautiously gained the path beneath.

"Strange, yet noble creature!" muttered the fugitive to himself, as he stood at the entrance of the cavern, watching her descent. "She has not made any promise of secrecy; but one feels that a woman like that might be trusted with

more than life. I'faith! one might envy the Elector of Hanover and Captain Archibald Campbell such a subject and such a mistress. The rose was dropping, did she say? Flowers are but foolish emblems. There is an eagle, one of the same sort that hovered above the vessel as we approached the Scottish shore. Tullibardine pointed it out to me at the time. That were a fitter symbol; and that sails on." And, catching, as ambition is wont to catch, at such auguries, he watched the flight of the kingly bird, soaring upward until it was lost in the distance; and then, cheered by the omen, retired into his place of refuge, with his usual *sang froid*, where excellent, as he had himself boasted, at making a shift, he speedily kindled some dry sticks, by snapping the lock of his pistol, and setting light, by that means, to the stump of a tobacco pipe, lengthened sufficiently for use by the insertion of a

tube of oaten straw, applied himself vigorously to the task of stifling the sense of present ennui and future danger, and the still more pressing claims of a keen appetite in the fumes of the "fragrant weed."

Marion, on her part, flushed and agitated, contrived to reach home, unsuspected. She walked straight into the small room that she was accustomed to call her parlour, which contained what little property a Highland lady of that day could call her own; and Miss Marion Campbell's possessions in that way were the admiration of Argyleshire.

She boasted, besides the ordinary complement of high-backed chairs, narrow settees, and diminutive tea-tables, a harpsichord, a scrutoire surmounted with glass doors, serving at once for writing-desk and book-case, and furnished with the usual limited female library; a japan

cabinet, well stuffed with choice china, mixed with divers curiosities, natural and artificial, of questionable beauty, and not remarkable for preservation; a glass case of gorgeous humming birds; and a gilt cage, containing a recent gift of her cousin—a bullfinch of great tameness, and such extraordinary accomplishments, that he not only drew his own water in an ingenious bucket constructed for the purpose, but attested his loyalty by piping very successfully the whole of the national anthem, from the first bar to the last, and had completely won the old piper's affections, by making certain indistinct and far-off efforts to catch the notes of the "Gathering of the Clan," as performed by him for a full hour every morning, walking up and down in front of the hall door. Dutch tiles decorated the chimney, India paper covered the walls, and the little apartment had a look of snugness

and comfort, hardly to have been expected amongst the wild hills of the north. The starry white jessamine, the everlasting pea, and the hardy purple clematis—

"The favoured flower
That bears the name of virgin's bower"—

were trained round the windows; and a half glass door opened upon a sheltered flower-plot, bordered with thrift, and gay with pinks, larkspurs, sweet-williams, and garden lilies, intermixed with tall rose trees and carefully-trained bushes of Dutch honeysuckle, each almost as short, and quite as round, as a Dutch cheese; whilst another door, on the opposite side of the room, led, by a narrow winding staircase, to her sleeping chamber above.

It was a very complete lady's apartment; although most of the advantages of its insulation, and its power of egress from the castle without the knowledge of the other inhabitants, had hitherto been

thrown away upon its fair possessor. She now decided that Janet and Luath should pass through the glass door, when setting forth on their moonlight expedition. There was, to be sure, a wall round one side of the little flower garden into which it opened; whilst, on the other, it sank abruptly to the lake from which her father derived his territorial title; but that wall was in so precarious a state, and Janet so strong and active, that there was little doubt of her surmounting the difficulty. As to Luath, he would clear it at a bound.

Sunny and cheerful was Marion's little parlour, with its in-door comforts and luxuries, and its out-door prettinesses, its pleasant garden, and its sidelong peep of the calm clear waters, shut in by sheltering hills; and cheerful and sunny had been the temper with which the young Scottish maiden—high-born, healthful, and fair, the beloved and only daughter of

a kind and indulgent father, the betrothed bride of the man whom she loved best in the world—had been wont to return to it, to pursue her ordinary avocations, after her daily ramble among the mountains, or by the lake side.

Now her mood was changed. Anxious, uneasy, unquiet, the secret with which she had become acquainted—a secret which she felt must be imparted to no one, save her faithful Janet—must be held sacred at every risk—weighed upon her like a sin. She sate down to her scrutoire, with the double purpose of depositing, in one of its little recesses, the half-fallen rose, (for, with the softened feeling so natural to a woman, when rendering, at a great risk, a great service, she had already relented towards him by whom it had been presented,) and of writing the important billet, which, with Luath, was to form his passport; but, harassed with

doubts whether, in following the impulse of the moment, she had done right or wrong, and weighed down by the horrible responsibility belonging to her situation, she had no sooner folded the flower carefully in silver paper, and cleared one of the pigeon-holes for its reception, than, with an irresistible movement of self-pity, mingled, it may be, with a shade of self-distrust, she laid her head upon her hand, and burst into tears.

Her heart, somewhat relieved by that great female comfort and privilege, a hearty fit of crying, she lifted up her head, with the intention of writing her letter forthwith, and chasing the subject, as much as might be, from her mind, when her attention was arrested by a packet, which she had dislodged from its place in depositing the token-flower, and which had unrolled itself in falling, and now lay open before her eyes.

It was a water-colour drawing, of great finish and beauty, executed by Helen, and representing the two friends in a glen near the castle. Marion, richly dressed, was seated in the foreground; one little hand thrown round the neck of the faithful Luath, whose honest countenance, always animated and intelligent, was awakened into double life by the report of Dungallan's gun, whose figure was seen farther down the glen, firing at a red deer, bounding by. Helen had drawn herself in profile, standing behind her companion, accoutred in plaid and boddice, as a Highland lassie, and setting off, by her darker complexion and simpler garb, the delicate and swanlike loveliness of the young beauty of Locheden.

Even in this picture, the unselfish and amiable character of the artist might be traced. Herself eminently handsome, she had cast into the shade her own graceful

figure and noble features, and had given all her care to heighten the charms of her friend.

Marion's spirits, already weakened, could not resist the flood of recollection that burst upon her at sight of this drawing, and of some stanzas which had served it for an envelope; slight, but graceful verses, in which the poet had mingled, with fond praises of his sister's skill as a portrait painter, very intelligent hints of his own devotion to the fair original.

"Poor Helen!" sighed she; "poor, poor Dungallan!"

The sigh was echoed from behind her, and turning round, with a shock of nervous trepidation, she saw her Cousin Archibald leaning upon her chair.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Campbell, for daring to look over you," said he, somewhat stiffly; "but having, after despatching answers to communications of

some consequence, sought you in your usual works, and receiving, upon my returning to the castle, the most contradictory answers to my questions as to your 'whereabout,' I was tempted, by the open door, and the sight of my friend Luath, to use my old privilege of the *entrée*, and make my appearance in your withdrawing room. Old Angus informed me that you were walking, and well; Mistress Janet, on the contrary, said that you were at home and indisposed; and, without intending, believe me, to intrude upon meditations which were clearly not intended to meet the general eye, I could not resist the temptation to inquire personally, which of the two reports was correct."

"Both were right, to a certain point," said Marion, with some effort. "I walked out, as I generally do, after breakfast, and returned, not ill, indeed, but less well than usual."

"It pleased Mistress Janet to deny that you had been out at all," persisted Archibald drily; eyeing, with no good will, the waiting damsel, who had, by this time, made her way into the apartment, and was busying herself in collecting her lady's bonnet and shawl. "However, to let that matter rest. I wished to warn you against rambling about unattended, at this particular time. Intelligence has been received that one of the prime leaders in this rebellion, the very chief over whose portrait, conjoined with your own, I find you weeping, has been traced to this neighbourhood."

"Eh, sirs! Dungallan! Guidness save him, puir chiel, frae thae bloody redcoats!" was the ejaculation of Janet.

"Whether there be more truth in the exploded doctrine of sympathies than it suits the philosophers of this enlightened age to admit," continued Archibald, doggedly, "or whether the interest which you

and Mistress Janet there, are pleased to testify in his fate, together with this mysterious walk, may serve to solve the enigma of his lurking about a place so remote from his own country, and apparently surrounded by enemies, remains to be determined. At all events, the coincidence is curious."

"My grateful affection for his sister, the daughter of my poor mother's dearest friend, the friend and instructress of my own childhood, might well account for any interest that I might take in Dungallan's fate," said Marion, rousing herself as she perceived the effect which her passive dejection and silent acquiescence in his suspicions, was producing upon the jealous temper of her lover. "If he fell a victim to these cruel, cruel laws, poor Helen's happiness would be ruined for ever."

"Sisters are convenient persons," observed Captain Campbell. "I am unfor-

tunate in not possessing one; although, even if I were happy enough to boast a relation as accomplished as Miss Helen Cameron, I should lack the skill to set off her presents with a garnish of love verses. I am none of "these same metre ballad-mongers, thank Heaven!" added he, with increasing bitterness. "I am of Hotspur's mind, and

> 'Had rather hear a brazen candlestick turned,
> Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree;
> And that would nothing set my teeth on edge,
> Nothing so much as mincing poetry.'"

"As for my walk, this morning," began Marion, desirous of turning the conversation, "that"—Fettered by the recollection of all that had passed in that morning's walk, and heart-struck by the sternness of his gaze, her voice faltered, and she suddenly stopped.

"What have I done, Archibald, that you should look at me and speak to me so

unkindly ?" said she, after a short pause, turning to him, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, and a sweetness and earnestness of manner that won its way instantly to the lover's heart. He soothed and apologised, and, before they parted to dress for dinner, a perfect reconciliation had taken place, and he had vowed, for the fiftieth time, never again to suffer a shade of jealousy to pass across his mind.

Such vows are easily made ; but to keep them requires a cooler temperament than that of Archibald Campbell: twenty times, that very afternoon, was the stifled passion upon the brink of bursting forth.

We must all have felt, even although we may have been fortunate enough not to have a secret of life and death in our charge, like poor Marion, how difficult it is, when the mind is filled with one subject, to keep up an easy and unembarrassed

conversation upon any other; the more especially when our companion is one to whom we have been accustomed to confide every thought as it happened to arise. In such a situation, not only is our behaviour embarrassed and constrained, but there is a sort of spell over our faculties, so that, in steering clear of the one great danger, we run foul of all sorts of minor perils, and say and do, we hardly know what, in a vain endeavour to cover the awkwardness of our real position.

In the present case, for instance, Marion affected an exuberance of animal spirits, depressing, rather than exhilarating, to the listener; and as different from her general easy cheerfulness, as the rouge of a haggard court beauty, from the natural colouring of youth and health. She rattled on the harpsichord, with a rapidity which put melody quite out of the question, the liveliest tunes that she could recollect; sang,

in a voice from which her usual arch sweetness was banished by agitation, the gayest of her national songs; choosing, quite unconsciously to herself, but in a manner which her auditor did not fail to remark, such airs as she had been accustomed to sing with Helen, and those which had been the particular favourites of her brother; and, when, at last, she had quite exhausted herself with the exertion, she rose from the harpsichord, and, taking up the apron that she was flowering, requested that he would read to her while she worked, as Dungallan used to do to Helen.

It was now the Captain's turn to show that a *tete-à-tete* between two lovers is not always so saccharine a matter as is erroneously supposed.

Turning over the newest books that he could find amongst her collection, he lighted upon Richardson's great novel, then in course of publication, the unknown catas-

trophe of which excited so much curiosity and interest, not merely amidst the flower-bed of young ladies by whom the author was surrounded, but amongst some score of persons of quality, who despatched letter after letter (one of them—Lady Bradshaigh—even writing upon her knees) to ask for the reformation of the hero, and a happy conclusion to the story, with as earnest supplications, and as strong reasons to back their petition, as if they had been pleading for the real, actual, life-long felicity of two real, actual, living and existing human beings—the strongest tribute, by the way, to the power of the book, to its extraordinary verisimilitude and truthfulness, ever received by any author.

One of Lovelace's most characteristic letters did Captain Campbell address himself to read, avoiding, with the instinct of a high-bred gentleman, all that could be painful to female delicacy, and giving to

the racy wit, the eloquent sophistry of that remarkable creation of Richardson's genius, all the advantage of the most intelligent and animated elocution; so that Marion's attention was excited, in spite of herself.

"What a wretch!" exclaimed she, as he finished the account of one of his most teazing interviews with poor Clarissa. "What a cruel, unfeeling, cold-hearted wretch!"

"I don't know that," replied Archibald. (Be it remembered, in vindication of my hero, that only four volumes out of the eight had yet been published, and that Lovelace's final resolution was still in suspense.) "I don't know that. The lady seems to me to have been quite as cold-hearted as the gentleman; or, rather, hearts on both sides seem to have been pretty much out of the question. She, justly, as you will say, distrusted his honour; and he, with at least as much

justice, doubted of her affection. The whole affair seems to me a game of chess, at which—barring false moves, which it is the author's business to guard against—the most skilful player will be sure to prove victorious. All you ladies exclaim, 'Poor Clarissa!' and, if she had loved him, I should be as ready as the best of you to echo the cry. But love is synonymous with confidence, and this paragon of her sex does not know what the word means. If she had relied upon him!—if she had trusted him! One wonders that Richardson did not see how much his book would have gained in interest by representing Clarissa as enamoured of Lovelace; but he lives amongst ladies, and piques himself, it is said, upon his knowledge of the female heart; and, therefore, it is not wonderful that he should show them as he sees them, and as they are," added he bitterly, "delighting in tormenting those

that love them best. Poor Clarissa, indeed! rather, poor Lovelace!"

At this moment, it was some relief to Marion, whose apron had certainly not improved by her afternoon's labours, that the weather, which had been louring all the afternoon, now assumed the appearance of one of the terrific storms of those mountain regions. The evening closed in prematurely, the clouds gathered dark and heavy, the wind moaned in gusts through the dark firs, and swept across the lake, whilst quick flashes of sharp, rapid lightning gleamed at the edge of the horizon, and the growl of distant thunder, proclaimed, in Nature's awfullest voice, the gathering of the coming tempest.

The momentary passions of men were hushed before it. The lover sate, contemplating, by the fitful glare of the lightning, the fair face of his beloved, pallid and sad from anxiety and sorrow; and once again his heart smote him for his unkindness.

"Marion, dearest Marion, do not you play the distrustful maiden with me, who, Heaven knows, have no desire upon this earth, but your happiness and honour! Be frank with me—confide in me, I conjure you! I see, I know, that there is a secret that weighs upon your mind at this moment. Trust it to me, and you shall not repent your reliance. Shew me but what you wish, and it shall be done. My power in this district is greater than you know of; my intelligence more accurate than you suspect. Say only, 'Dungallan is my friend's brother, and therefore I wish to save him;' say even, 'Dungallan is my own early friend—and he shall be saved.' Only think me worthy of your confidence, and see how I will deserve it. Nay; even—although the thought be fatal to my every hope of happiness—even if his danger have revealed to you feelings hitherto unsuspected, and if, in aiding his escape, I give

assistance to a favoured rival—yet, for your dear sake, to spare you the misery you would feel if he were taken, I swear to befriend him, at whatever peril it may be. I am not now on service, and there is only one of those unfortunate fugitives whom it would be eternal dishonour for a soldier to preserve. For Dungallan, since your happiness seems bound up in his safety, I will not hesitate to risk rank, fortune, life itself. Only trust me, only confide in me, if not as your devoted lover, yet as your nearest kinsman, your truest friend! Speak to me, I conjure you, Marion! I beseech you,—speak!"

He hung over her affectionately, as he delivered, with an earnest truthfulness that could not be mistaken, this outburst of fond and disinterested love, gazing in her face as he spoke, and grasping, with all the fervour of passion, her cold and trembling hands.

"Will you not answer me? Do you disdain even to reply to my offer of service —my most sincere and honest offer? You do! I see plainly that you do! I see and feel, too plainly, that you desire my absence; and I will no longer intrude upon your privacy. Farewell, madam! May you find a truer and a more devoted heart than that which you have spurned from you!"

And, lingering a moment on the threshold, in the hope, it may be, of being recalled, he left the room.

Marion wrung her hands in bitterness of vexation. Never had her heart so yearned towards the kinsman, the friend, the betrothed bridegroom, whom she had suffered to leave her, probably for ever.

"Oh, that I dared to undeceive him! But, for his own sake, I dare not, I must not. I have pledged myself to this adventure, and I must abide the trial. May

the God of mercy—who has willed that we should assist a fellow-creature in distress, who has gifted woman with a strength of sympathy which almost counterbalances her feebleness of body—may He grant that I bear it with firmness! It is a fearful night, Janet," continued she, addressing the faithful soubrette, who just now entered the apartment, "Janet, do you fear to encounter the storm? If you do, say so honestly, and I will go myself. I have no right to impose upon your kindness and fidelity a danger from which I should shrink. There is little left, Heaven knows, that should make me cling to life. Speak frankly, my good girl. If your heart fails you, say so at once."

Janet's answer was bold and confident. And, somewhat soothed by the fearless readiness of her confidante, her predictions that they should succeed in their enterprise, and that all jealousies and suspicions

would be ultimately cleared up (for her acuteness did not fail to detect the chief source of her lady's despondency), Marion sat down to write, with more firmness than she had expected to be able to command, the important billet to her father, which, in case of the fugitive being intercepted by the soldiers, would, she believed, from the respect paid to the name of one of the most loyal and most powerful chiefs of the powerful and loyal house of Campbell, prove an effectual and unquestionable passport.

Her letter was short and simple; stating only that, as Captain Archibald Campbell had resolved not to join Locheden in his hunting expedition, she had sent Luath by the bearer; that all was well at the Castle; and that, wishing good sport to her dear father, she hoped to see him return in a few days.

Armed with this document, and laden

with the promised provisions, the venison pasty and the whisky ("lifted," to use Janet's own phrase), together with a certain pair of "shoon," belonging to her lover, Donald, plaid garments of the Campbell set, and a collar and chain for Luath, the faithful waiting damsel, followed by the no less faithful hound, took the opportunity of a lull in the storm to set forth upon her expedition.

Marion accompanied them as far as the garden wall, which Janet and her four-footed attendant cleared with somewhat more of difficulty than she had anticipated, and then returned alone to her solitary apartment, to start at every sound, and feel each moment, as it passed, marked by the beatings of her own anxious heart.

Sadly and wearily the hours dragged along. The tempest had returned with tenfold violence; and Marion, as she found the noises in the castle subsiding, one by one, giving token that the inhabi-

tants had retired to rest, and that she remained the only watcher within its walls—whilst over the pelting rain and moaning wind without, burst ever and anon peals of thunder, reverberating in awful grandeur amongst the mountains, preceded by lightning that glared with livid and horrible lustre through the room —began to feel the pressure of a close-clinging fear, a down-weighing responsibility, as the possible fate of her attached dependent flashed across her mind. If her courage should give way as she returned alone, and she should fall in the darkness from the ledge of the rock! If the springs on the hill-top should rise suddenly, and, joining the gatherings from the pouring rain, gush down the channel of the winter water-course! If she should be struck by the lightning! Either of these thoughts was too terrible to dwell upon.

The distant clap of a door within the

mansion, followed, as she thought (for the dizzying boundings of her own pulses, the throbbings of her heart and brain, were such as to confuse all outward sounds) by the rapid footsteps of a man along the galleries and through the vaulted passages of the old building, harbingered yet another fear. If Janet should be pursued! If she should be intercepted! If the stranger should be discovered! She heard, or she thought she heard, the castle gate unfastened; and, the feeling of suspense becoming insupportable, she ventured to open gently the door of her little parlour, when a rush of wind, as if from an outer door left open, extinguished her taper, and left her in all the horror that a darkness as of midnight, interrupted only by the now less frequent flashes of the lightning, could add to her former terror.

The storm was at length abating. She found her way to the glass door, and

opened it; and after an interval that seemed to last hours rather than minutes, she was aware of Luath, as he came bounding up the path, followed—could it be the footsteps of two persons that she heard, advancing with stealthy rapidity? A moment decided the question. Janet rushed fearfully in, dragging after her, her, as it seemed, unwilling companion; and, first carefully locking and bolting the door, and barring the shutters, an operation which, in spite of the darkness, she performed with singular dexterity, she then contrived to thrust the stranger (for it was no other) up the staircase leading to Marion's sleeping apartment; and, having locked that door also, and deposited the key in her pocket, began relating to her lady, in cautious whispers, but with her usual volubility, the causes which had induced her to resolve upon the bold measure of bringing him to the castle.

They had been pursued. The rain had rendered the descent from the cave so dangerous, and had so flooded the path below, that the fugitive, forgetting his own danger in the manly duty of protecting a female, had insisted, in spite of Janet's earnest remonstrances, on escorting her as far at least as the wall over which she had effected her exit from the castle gardens. The light, shielded from the action of the wind by an ingeniously-contrived lanthorn of oiled paper, by the aid of which he had contrived to obtain for her a safe footing down the face of the precipice, had, she imagined, been observed from the upper windows of the castle.

Certain it was, that, before they reached the spot to which the fugitive had insisted upon accompanying her, they had heard footsteps at some distance behind them, and had, as the clouds partially cleared away, and the moon emerged for a few

moments, been enabled to perceive that their pursuer was a soldier. Janet declared her conviction that it must be either "Captain Archie himsel', or the loun Donald," come to reclaim "the plaidie and shoon," which she had boasted, with so much glee, of having "lifted" from her military admirer, a few hours before. Some one from the house it certainly was; for Luath had recognized him, and, giving a sudden jerk to the chain by which he was held, had succeeded in freeing himself, and bounding towards the intruder, although he had returned to them upon hearing her voice.

Under these circumstances, the active waiting-maid had, with great presence of mind, availed herself of a stunted pollard oak, which concealed and facilitated the passage over the wall to the garden, and (first dashing away the tell-tale light) had literally hauled up, after her, both her

companions, each of whom had, for a wonder, as she observed, been gifted with sufficient sense to submit to her guidance.

"Ill befa' that weary lanthron!" quoth Janet, "I tell't the gentleman, gin he wad stay quiet i' the cave, I'd nae fear o' getting safe to the foot o' the rock. Wi' my plaidie rowed round me, and nane to look on, I should hae slid doun the path, ye ken, like a snaw wreath at Yule. But he wadna be guidit. I'm minded that he's ane that has ta'en his ain gate owre lang. Weel, but ye maun hae a light!" And off she ran, finding her way through the darkness with the security and ease which seems one of the many privileges of the light-hearted and the fearless.

During her absence, a fresh perplexity occurred to her mistress. Horses were heard galloping into the court, and a violent knocking at the gate was succeeded by a parley between Captain Archibald, and the visitors. The voice of one of

them was, she thought, familiar to her; and, to her unspeakable consternation, she found that he was advancing with Janet towards the apartment; Janet talking at the top of her voice, to give notice of his approach to her lady.

"Oot the nicht, General! Na, indeed, hae we not, except indeed to ca' Luath, poor hound, who's aye ganging forth in the rain. Sae my leddy and I we got a wee wet, and the wind put out the taper, and sae"—

Whilst Janet thus "followed her instinct as a lady's maid, and lied," her companion, General Campbell, closely followed by Archibald, stepped forward into the room, where Marion sate trembling with anxiety and apprehension.

"I intrude upon you only for an instant, my fair cousin, late as is the hour and indisposed as I regret to see you are, merely to announce to you that I shall, to-morrow, early, be obliged to steal away your

visitor, whose presence is required in Edinburgh, to meet his brother, and Lord and Lady Bellasis, and their pretty daughter Lady Betty. Give my compliments to Locheden, and tell him we have accounts of the rebel chief, Dungallan, one of the ringleaders, having ventured into Argyle's country. Tell him that we have taken care of the land passes, and that we shall borrow the castle boat in the morning, to despatch a messenger across the loch. And now, good night. Go to bed, my dear, and refresh your roses. I don't like those pale cheeks." And, with a kind pressure of the hand, the good General quitted the apartment. Archibald lingered behind.

"You hear that Dungallan, that this favoured *friend*, I presume you call him, has been traced into this neighbourhood, that he is even supposed to be upon this estate. Why do I speak of reports and suppositions when I know that he is here?" added Captain Campbell, impressively.

"You are mistaken! Indeed you are mistaken!" rejoined his cousin.

"Mistaken!—when I saw him enter the garden this very night!—when I can track his footsteps across this room!—when here is his glove dropped upon the floor! dropped at the very door which leads to your bedchamber, and to your bedchamber only!" cried he bitterly, flinging from him with violence the glove which he had picked up. "The rebel is here, and I know not what weakness hinders me from doing my duty as an officer in the King's service, and delivering him up at once to the General."

"Do as seems best to you, Captain Campbell," said Marion faintly. "My life, and far more than my life, my reputation, are in your power. Deal with me as you will."

"Nay, madam, your safety, and the honour of my kinsman's house, must ever

be sacred in my eyes. Unkindly, cruelly as you have treated me, I cannot forget what we once were to each other. I warn you, however, that escape is impossible. You will live to repent this night's work. Farewell for ever!" And, without even a parting glance, he hurried out of the room.

"Ye are mair like to repent this nicht's wark yersel, captain," observed Janet, quietly, as she bolted the door after him, and addressed herself to the double task of comforting her lady and releasing the prisoner. "Gin the land-passes be waylaid, we maun try the loch. I'll gie a gay guess that the castle boatie 'll be missin' the morn."

And so it was managed. In less than two hours, the stranger, accompanied by Luath, was rowing across the loch; whilst, at daybreak the next morning, General Campbell and Archibald took their departure for Edinburgh.

Time dragged heavily on. Luath had returned, weary and travel-stained, without either his absence or his arrival having excited any suspicion in the castle. Nothing had been heard of the letter; and Marion had the satisfaction of believing that the sacrifice of her happiness had not been made in vain, that she had at least succeeded in rescuing the object of her compassion.

Locheden had, upon his return, found his daughter sick and drooping; and, as days lengthened into weeks, and weeks into months, and left the prolonged absence of her lover unexplained, the old chief began to chafe with anger and impatience.

He had heartily approved of a match which would unite his only child to the heir-male to whom, in default of a son, his own estate would descend, and who, besides his personal good gifts, and his high reputation for gallantry and military skill, inherited, in right of his English mother,

a property which might be reckoned enormous for a Highlander in those days; but this neglect of one whom he regarded as the very apple of his eye, awakened all the irritability of his nature, and his fierce displeasure added tenfold, as that particular way of proving affection commonly does add, to the distress of her by whose injuries, real or supposed, his wrath had been originally excited.

Affairs were in this position, when, one fine morning in October, despatches arrived from General Campbell, calculated to increase, if that were possible, the previous exasperation. After announcing his intention to visit Locheden, almost as soon as his letter could reach them, accompanied by their young kinsmen, (Captain Archibald's next brother, John, being an officer in his own regiment,) he proceeded to say:—

"You will have heard, I am sure, with

great pleasure (for I take for granted that the bridegroom elect has apprised you of his good fortune,) of our gallant cousin's intended marriage with Lady Betty Bellasis, the English heiress and beauty, who has made so great a sensation in Edinburgh this summer. There have been difficulties, of course, upon the score of fortune and country with the Earl and Countess, but love has conquered them all; and the chief object of our journey to Locheden is to consult you, the kinsman, guardian, and friend, to whom both these young men are so deeply indebted, upon the arrangements as to residence and settlements, which this happy event will render necessary. The bridegroom elect is, in every way, a lucky fellow. In addition to her fortune and her beauty, *la future* is as charming a creature as one shall see on a summer's day—a fit companion for your sweet Marion, my pet and favourite. Heaven send them happy together!"

"A Lowlander! an Englishwoman! an heiress!—fortune-hunter! rascal! scoundrel, that he is!" exclaimed the old chieftain, throwing from him the unlucky letter, and striding up and down the hall, in breathless wrath. "And the doited idiot of a General, to even her with my Marion—the Sassenach doll! Let them take care how they speak of my daughter! Old as I am, the blood of M'Callamore runs as red in my veins as in theirs. Only let them dare to lightly *her*"——And the very excess and fierceness of his anger took away the power of expression.

Marion listened tremblingly, delaying till calmer moments any attempts to soothe and expostulate.

"Coming, are they?" burst forth the enraged father. "Coming! — ay, by Heaven!" continued he, catching a glimpse of a party of horsemen approaching the castle—"here they come. And they think

to find entrance, do they?" added he bitterly. "They come to take account of our accommodations, that they may bring their braw young bride to insult over the old man and his daughter! Let them wait until I be dead. Not a foot shall that villain set in Locheden, until he walks over my corpse. Angus! Duncan! Where are the loons loitering? See that the gates be barred! Let none enter!"

"Stay, I implore you, I conjure you, my dearest father! For my peace and happiness, for the honour and dignity of your daughter and your house, refrain from this violence! Give entrance to them all. Receive them as usual. I ask you, in the name of maiden pride, of maiden modesty, to restrain all demonstrations of anger. Let him not imagine, let him not suspect——God knows how sincerely I wish him happy," cried Marion. "Give them admittance, I exhort you, I

entreat you! Let them see no difference! Surely you will not vex and grieve your poor child. Yield to me in this, I implore you, dearest father!" And she threw her arms round his neck, leaned her head on his shoulder, and wept.

He kissed her with the fondest affection. "You are an angel, my darling, and shall have your own way in everything. Compare an English moppet with my noble Marion! The scoundrel will be miserable —that's my comfort. His father married a Lowlander for the sake of the siller, a peevish Southron dame, that worried the life fairly out of him—and so will this great leddie. We are weel rid o' the loon. Dungallan, puir laddie, 's worth twenty of him. He's won safe to France, ye ken, to his sister; and, gin we can save the estate from the clutches of thae Englishers," said the old chieftain, losing *his* English as he lost his temper, and checking him-

self as he perceived the effect his hint produced upon his daughter. "Weel! weel! We'll no talk of that the now. You shall see how civil I'll be to the villain. I'll no condescend to be angry. I'll take a lesson out of his ain book, and be as fause and fair as himsel'. Here the rascal comes. You shall see how doucely I'll behave. Eh, now, that sic a perjured traitor should look so like an honest man!"

That Locheden fully intended his behaviour to be as false and fair as he believed his kinsman, there is no manner of doubt. But the inveterate truthfulness of threescore years was too much for his new resolution. He did not, it is true, bar his gates against his visitors, nor kick them out of doors, being entered. But he drew back haughtily from their proffered hands, with a look as fierce and wild as one of his own mountain eagles, and eyed Archibald, in particular, as if he had a mind to knock

him down. General Campbell, a kind and acute person, and a man of the world, saw, at a glance, that something was amiss, and, determining not to enter upon family matters until the aspect of affairs should be somewhat cleared, began, after an affectionate expression of regret at Marion's pale cheeks, to talk over the news of the day.

"You have heard the grand piece of intelligence, I presume, Locheden, that this foolish young man, the Pretender, who has occasioned us so much trouble in chasing him up and down the country, has given us the slip at last, and got clear off to France. The thing is really so. Besides the accounts in the public papers, which are sufficiently precise and particular, I have a letter myself from a French friend, the Comte de Clermont, who actually saw him land. Why, heyday! my pretty Marion," quoth the good General, observ-

ing the involuntary clasping of her hands, and the sudden rush of blood that coloured her fair face to the brow, as she listened to his words with breathless interest—"what should there be in this news to make you brighten up on a sudden? You are no damsel of the White Rose, I hope? No Flora M'Donald exploits here? Eh, Locheden?" And he turned to relate to the chief all that was then known of the escape of Charles Edward; whilst Archibald, to whom her emotion was as a flash of light that showed him the whole thing at a glance, advanced to his fair cousin.

"*He*, then, and not Dungallan, was the stranger at the cave? Charles Edward, the Pretender, the Chevalier, the Prince?"

"Nay, give him what title you will. I am no damsel of the White Rose, as the General calls it; although I risked much—ay, and would risk much again—to preserve a fugitive in peril of his life, thrown,

under such extraordinary circumstances, upon my poor resources for protection and assistance."

"But why not intrust me with the secret? Why occasion so much unnecessary pain—certainly to me—may I not say to both of us?"

"To have trusted you, Captain Campbell, an officer in the service of the King of England, with such a secret as that, however the confidence might have relieved and comforted myself, would have been to endanger your professional reputation, your honour, perhaps even your life. No, I cannot think that I was wrong! The more especially," added she, in a lower voice, and with peculiar sweetness and gentleness of manner—"the more especially, as the transient pain must have been long forgotten in your late and present happiness. Heaven knows, I congratulate you most sincerely."

"Happiness!—congratulate!" echoed Captain Campbell, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Marion, my dow!" said her father, striding rapidly across the room—"I have done a great injustice. It's no our friend here, but Johnny, his brother, that's about to marry Lady Betty, who seems to be a fine spunky lassie, for all she has the ill luck to be an Englisher. Archie, my lad, I crave your pardon for thinking you could be such a villain!" And the old chief and the young soldier shook hands, with hearty affection and goodwill.

"There has been a small mistake on both sides, as it seems," observed General Campbell, joining the little group; "but matters are clearing up now, to judge from the gentleman's smiles and the lady's blushes; and, if I be permitted to advise, the best way to prevent a recurrence of doubts and misgivings, would be to have

if it had been necessary, to gain admittance, that I should have constructed as vile a canzone as Signor Ricci,—and have dreamed as detestable a dream as Signor Puzzi,—and dramatised the Judgment of Solomon into the bargain, I'd have done it. We have sent a dutiful billet to the marchesa, and I have no doubt but, for joy at getting rid of the lawsuit, and out of compliment to my poetical genius, she will behave like a reasonable woman—the more especially as what is done cannot be undone, and all the anger in the world will not mend it. So now, my fairest Beatrice, you have nothing to do but to set her the good example of bearing misfortune with philosophy, and pay me my wager. The doves! signora, the doves!"

THE LOST PEARL.

"The gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

MILTON.

IT was somewhere in the last quarter of the last century, that Charles Pemberton, the younger son of an ancient but impoverished family, having committed the old-fashioned folly of marrying a young lady, for no better qualifications than beauty, sense, and goodness, without regard to those worldly considerations which modern prudence deems indispensable, esteemed himself most fortunate to inherit, through the bequest of a distant relative,

a small estate in the Island of Ceylon; and to obtain a commission in a Dutch regiment serving in that colony, in which, in the course of fourteen or fifteen years, he attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Living chiefly upon his own property, about a mile from the beautiful village of Negumbo, amongst some of the finest scenery of Ceylon (which the inhabitants imagine to have been the abode of our first parents, the paradise of the old world); enjoying an elegant competence, and, all-sufficient to each other, Colonel and Mrs. Pemberton would have considered themselves blessed beyond the ordinary lot of humanity, in spite of their banishment from the country they loved so dearly, and the society they were so well calculated to adorn, but for the great evil of eastern climates, the successive deaths of several promising children. Five fine boys and girls had they followed to the grave; and

the only one who now remained to them was their little son William, a child remarkable for his affectionate temper, his intelligence, and his beauty; upon whom both parents doted, more particularly, perhaps, his mother, whose own health had been considerably injured by the repeated trials which her maternal feelings had undergone.

No tutor had been provided for Willy, whom they intended hereafter to send to England for his education. Meanwhile his father acted as his instructor, when at home in the intervals of duty, whilst Mrs. Pemberton supplied his place in his absence; but the active, lively boy was much about in the cinnamon plantation (just then beginning to be cultivated by the few British residents on the island), which were superintended by a Cingalese, called Vinna, a man of remarkable quickness and much apparent fidelity; whilst on longer

excursions he was put in charge of a superior domestic servant, a Malay of the name of Gatura, who, by his pliancy of manner, and powers of amusement, had greatly ingratiated himself with his young master.

So implicit was the colonel's confidence in these dependents, especially in Vinna—for there was an occasional expression in the dark eye of the Malay, which recalled to recollection the vindictiveness of his race; but such was his reliance upon Vinna's integrity and care, that it came upon him like no common shock, to find, having contracted for the sale of some essential oil of cinnamon (extracted from such fragments as happen to be broken off in packing up the bales), and having seen it actually measured and ready for delivery, that half-a-dozen bottles of this valuable oil, which sometimes sells as high as ten pounds British a pint, were missing; and that, upon

subjecting all concerned to an examination, two of the very peculiar bottles, in which the oil had been contained, were found in a corner of Vinna's hut, behind the earthen vessels used for cooking rice; whilst another was hidden between the brass basin and the pestle and mortar, where the spices are pounded, upon the bench which surrounded the apartment, and formed, with the articles which we have enumerated, nearly the whole of its simple furniture. The bottles were not merely distinguishable by their fabric and shape; but the strong aroma of the precious commodity, and even a few drops left in the bottom, proved that they had been secretly and hastily emptied of their contents; and that Vinna, the trusted superintendent of this valuable manufactory, was himself the thief.

After one simple but earnest denial of the charge—a denial to which his master

made no other reply than pointing to the concealed bottles—the delinquent attempted no farther defence, but resigned himself tranquilly to whatever punishment the laws might decree. That extremity was, however, averted by the intercession of Willy, whose urgent entreaty for pardon for his friend was so far complied with, that Colonel Pemberton contented himself with dismissing the favourite servant, who had set so flagrant an example of dishonesty to the labourers under his charge.

"Remember," said his master impressively, when paying the wages due to him and discharging him from his service, "Remember, that I have abstained from punishing you at the earnest solicitations of this child; but that if ever you again come before me for any act of theft or fraud, the chastisement will be exemplary." Vinna listened in silent submission, kissed the skirt of Willy's garment, and departed.

For a while the boy missed his kind and pleasant face in the cinnamon plantations and about the home-grounds; but the griefs of childhood are enviably brief, and he had nearly forgotten his old playfellow, when he was thrown unexpectedly in his way, many months afterwards, in a visit paid by himself and his father, attended by Gatura, to the pearl-fishery at Condatchy.

A gay and pleasant scene was this pearl-fishery. Thousands of persons, of all colours and nations, in the picturesque costumes of the East, from the rich travelling merchant who supply the great jewellers of our European cities, to the poorest of the Cingalese women and children, who hover around the sieves, and pore for days over the heaps of sand which have been thrown aside, in the hopes of lighting upon the smallest seedling pearl, crowd the streets of the temporary town (at other times a mere fishing village), washing, sifting,

boring, drilling, squabbling, and bargaining, in every variety of dialect and jargon; all intent upon the beautiful luxury destined to add a costlier splendour to the monarch's crown, or a rarer charm to the brow of beauty.

Willy was delighted; all the more delighted that he met his old friend Vinna, and that Vinna had been singularly prosperous. A speculating merchant had not only engaged divers on his own account, but had employed persons to examine the sand that had been thrown by, after passing, or being supposed to pass, through the sieves. Vinna had been fortunate enough to discover, in a portion which must have been spilled before being subjected to that process, a pear-shaped pearl of such size and beauty, as had not been found off the coast of Ceylon within the memory of the oldest trader connected with the fishery. An agent of the King

of Candy, specially despatched by his royal master for the purpose of obtaining such a jewel, to gratify a fancy expressed by his favourite wife, who wanted such an one to complete a set of ornaments, was at that moment treating for it with his employer. Vinna ran to procure it to show to the boy, and placed it on a crimson shawl to display the shape and colour to the best advantage. At Willy's entreaty, Colonel Pemberton also advanced to admire the treasure, attended by Gatura, who had accompanied them to Condatchy; and a little crowd of merchants and natives gathered round the place, enlarging upon its merits, marvelling at Vinna's good fortune, or rather the extraordinary luck of his employer, and wondering how, by any degree of carelessness, a pearl of such magnitude could have escaped from the sieves.

Whilst these assistants, in the heat of

their discussion, stood divided into separate groups, and Colonel Pemberton, at Willy's entreaty, was speaking with a grave and measured kindness to Vinna, his employer and the agent of the King of Candy having concluded their bargain, returned for the pearl. They applied to Vinna, who motioned to the shawl which he had deposited on the top of a high covered basket close behind him. The basket was there, and the shawl; but the pearl was gone! The consternation was general. Vinna wrung his hands in agony; the buyer and seller of the precious commodity were in equal dismay. Every man looked suspiciously on his fellow. Some disclaimed; some accused. Gatura, who had stood nearest the basket upon which the valuable jewel had been so unhappily left, insisted so vehemently upon being searched, that, rather to pacify him and rid themselves of his clamour, than

from any positive mistrust, his dress and person were, as he desired, subjected to a very rigorous examination; nothing, of course, being found that could implicate him any way in the delinquency.

In the meantime, the less successful adventurers, who had before been loud in the expression of their astonishment that such a pearl could be found in such a manner, began to gather round Colonel Pemberton, to examine into the character which Vinna, whom they understood, from what had passed between them, to have been heretofore employed by him, had borne while in his service. The agent of the King of Candy, the purchaser of the pearl, and the speculator who had sold it, also approached with the same view. Willy, who, child as he was, saw the turn that matters were about to take, seized the opportunity to steal towards his friend.

"Go, Vinna! go!" said Willy; and,

with a sudden start, and a momentary pause, Vinna obeyed the injunction. He disappeared among the crowd; and, by the time that the questions of those interested had extracted from Colonel Pemberton the cause of his dismissal, and that two or three of the most determined called out to arrest him, he had made such good use of his time, as completely to baffle every effort of his pursuers: his flight, whilst it saved him from almost inevitable punishment, producing upon everybody, except Willy, who did battle manfully in his behalf, the most complete conviction of his guilt. It seemed as certain that he had stolen the pearl,—perhaps, that he had twice stolen it,—as that he had stolen the oil of cinnamon. No one believed in the possibility of his innocence, except our friend Willy.

The father and son returned to Negumbo; and, in a little while, the colonel was

called away on service; and, Mrs. Pemberton being in delicate health, Willy was left much to the care of Gatura, who spared no pains in his endeavour to win the favour of the lively and spirited boy. He constructed a pad, on which to take him before him on a blood horse, belonging to the colonel, and carried him every day upon some excursion to the cocoa groves (or topes), or the dreary forests which surrounded their habitation. One day, he took him to see the manner in which wild elephants are caught; and Willy was delighted with the sagacity and affection displayed by one of the tame ones, who, apparently recognising an old companion in the largest of those that had been ensnared, actually opened the fastenings of the gate for the release of his friend; thus shewing, although enslaved himself, his sense of the value of freedom. Willy was enchanted; and, on Gatura's dwelling

upon the grandeur and interest of a buffalo hunt, never ceased importuning the Malay to afford him that gratification.

One fine morning, accordingly, they set forth professedly to witness this remarkable spectacle. The high-bred steed carried them rapidly through the cocoa tope, into the very depth of the forest. No sign appeared of the hunters; but, pleased with the beauty of the scenery, the golden rays of the sun darting through the shaddock and the tamarind, and resting on the beautiful fruit of the jamboe, and amused by the variety of bright coloured birds and gorgeous butterflies, the boy took no note of the distance. At last, as the day advanced, the claims began to be felt, and he intimated to Gatura his desire to return home.

"Home!" said the Malay, in the low accent of bitter hate; "you never shall return. Do you remember the day—you,

child as you are, may forget; but on my memory that day is burnt in characters of fire—when, for striking this horse, ay, it was this very horse, as Colonel Pemberton, my master, your father, was pleased to think over hard, he snatched the whip from my hand, and struck me, ay, lashed me with it, as if I had been a beast? I grasped the crease in my bosom; but that would have been a brief and common vengeance. I have waited for such revenge as may endure; and now my hour is come. You, too, young sir! you were pleased to read out of some story-book to your mother that pearls might be hidden in the mouth; that stripping the dress, and searching the person, was no security against a skilful thief! Home shall you never come to tell your father that tale, unless, indeed, you can win your way through the beasts and reptiles, the snakes, and the panthers of this forest.

Down with you, sir! Do not cling around me in this manner! Let go my sash, or I will cut away those little hands! What noise is that? Off with you, I say!"

And, frightened at some real or imaginary noise, Gatura dashed the struggling child to the earth, and rode rapidly away, leaving in the boy's hands the shawl sash, by which he had clung so tightly, and which had been folded, after the oriental fashion, round the waist of the Malay. A small packet dropped from it—it was the lost pearl!

Hungry and bewildered as he was, the stout hearted boy lost neither his courage nor his presence of mind. He pocketed the precious jewel, plucked the unripe fruits to appease the cravings of appetite, and tried, with all his might, to retrace the way by which he had come, and to turn back to his home; but, far beyond his own knowledge, he only plunged deeper

and deeper in the forest. He avoided, however, with remarkable boldness and sagacity, the frequent dangers from snakes and wild animals, took refuge under a talipot-tree from a storm, which sent the shrieking flor-mouse to the same friendly shelter; and at night, remembering that the Cingalese sometimes constructed their habitations for security on the branches of trees, he climbed the tallest trunks that he could meet with to sleep.

What was the agony of the bereaved mother during that long and solitary night! Gatura had not returned, and, wholly unsuspicious of his treachery, she imagined that some fatal accident had happened to him and to his charge. Messenger after messenger did she despatch in every direction; Colonel Pemberton was recalled; and every means taken that the most anxious affection could dictate, to recover the missing child.

He, meanwhile, wandered on, subsisting on wild fruits by day, and sleeping in trees by night, until he had nearly reached the boundaries of Candy. He too, poor child, was heart-sick and home-sick. The high courage which he inherited from his father, animated him at the approach of danger; but at other moments, footsore, weary, bruised by falls, and torn by bushes, his spirits flagged, and his strength was exhausted. One day, as he was passing by some brushwood, which half concealed the entrance to a low cavern, a furious buffalo came bellowing up a track in the forest, and, pausing for an instant, lowered his head to attack the child. Another moment, and Willy would have been gored by his horns, or tossed into the air; but a man rushed from the cavern, and, seizing the child with one arm, with the other flung a piece of cloth (part of his own garments) over the head of the buffalo, blind-

ing him, and entangling his horns, so that the boy and his preserver had time to retreat into the cave, the entrance to which was too low to admit the enraged animal. Willy was saved; and turning to thank the friend to whose boldness and address he owed his life, he burst into tears of delight, clapped his little hands together, and shouted "Vinna! dear Vinna!"

Three days after this, Vinna, bending in respectful salutation, with his arms folded upon his bosom, stood in the presence of the beautiful wife of the Candian king. She listened to his little story, and listened pityingly, for she was a woman and a mother. She promised, with the grace of conscious power, and nobly did she redeem her promise, to redress all Vinna's grievances, whether as regarded the oil of cinnamon, which she justly suspected Gatura to have stolen, or the lost pearl; and with

regard to that pearl of pearls, the noble boy Willy, she made it her first business, her first pleasure, to send him home to his distracted parents, laden with presents, and accompanied by his brave preserver, the faithful Cingalese.

WEDDING SLIPPERS.

"This love will undo us all."—SHAKSPEARE.

ONE of the shortest and dreariest days in January was drawing to a close. Snow had fallen some days previously, and glared upon the roofs of the houses in the picturesque and irregular old town of Belford Regis, and lay mixed with ice, and trodden into a sort of wintry dust upon the highway. Snow, too, was visibly hanging in the grey and gloomy sky, waiting

only for milder weather—for the hour when the soft south-west should steal upon the black north-east—to come down in a world of white feathery flakes, and cover the earth with its bright, level, uniform beauty.

The streets, although not yet lighted, were almost deserted of carriages and passengers—except, indeed, the well-wrapt little boys and girls, tripping rapidly home from school, with cheeks almost as red as their red comforters; and the noisier and merrier troop of happy, ill-clad urchins, who came frisking and shouting from the pond at the top of the hill, the great pond opposite the Queen's head, where they had been keeping the cold at bay, by sliding and tumbling upon the ice, and pelting each other with snowballs, making, as it were, a playmate of the frost; and, excepting also careful servant-maids, wending, with cautious speed, over

the slippery pavement, laden with smoking dishes from the bake-houses; or hurrying pot-boys, or slower milkmen, rattling their jingling commodities against the icy steps of the doors, or the iron railing of the areas.

In a word, it was at the close of a winter's day, that, the morning influx of customers having intermitted, the shopmen and apprentices of Mr. Morris, the greatest haberdasher of Belford, had retired to warm their fingers in their own apartment —preferring the bright fire of the open grate to the smoky heat of the stove— after returning to their shelves, nicely folded up, the numerous articles taken down to gratify the fastidiousness or the caprice of lady-purchasers, for men, to do them justice, seldom do give this sort of trouble; leaving in the dusky range of show-rooms, rendered tenfold more gloomy by the waving draperies which darkened

the windows, and swayed to and fro in the dim twilight, only two individuals—a respectable-looking elderly man, who, mounted upon a high stool, was seated at a very business-looking railed-in desk, employed in writing, by the light of a single taper, in an equally business-like, tall, thick book, bound in calfskin; and a young man, particularly well-looking and gentlemanly, whose likeness to the former sufficiently marked their relationship, and who stood at his side, pretending to be occupied in arranging a drawer of rich satin ribbons, which he was rolling and unrolling, and doing unconsciously his very best to spoil, in the eagerness of his appeal to his father's feelings.

"Yes, sir, it is but too true—and a thousand times she has urged the fact upon me—that poor Elizabeth is only a servant maid in the family of our good rector, Mr. Sumner. A servant she cer-

tainly is, but a most honoured and trusted one. Mrs. Sumner was so struck by her intelligence and sweetness, above a dozen years ago, amongst the girls at the Green School, that she took her home to her own house partly to attend and partly to play with her elder children. She shared their advantages of education—not indeed the accomplishments which were unfitted for her station, but those better and rarer advantages which regard the cultivation of the mind, and the formation of the character; and Mr. Sumner's opinion of her has been sufficiently proved, by his having, since the death of his excellent wife, and the marriage of his eldest daughter, committed the direction of his house and of his two younger children unreservedly to her charge. A servant she is, but one accustomed to the management of a large family, to the keeping of the most exact and elaborate accounts, to the prudent and

careful expenditure of money—to everything, in short, that is most desirable in a tradesman's wife. I speak now merely in a worldly point of view, and say nothing of the beauty, the sweetness, the grace, and the modesty which makes her an object of admiration wherever she appears."

"She has no money," replied Mr. Morris, suspending for a moment his pen over the book in which he had been apparently most sedulously engaged in making various entries during his son's harrangue. "She has no money."

"Then her taste and skill in female apparel. You know, sir, how often you have said that, if my poor sisters had lived, you would have added millinery and dress-making to your business, and converted some part of our large premises up stairs into show-rooms. How often I have heard you say, that one branch of trade helped

the other; and that our opposite neighbour, Mr. Welsh, would not be able to keep his shop open against us, if it were not for his wife's caps and bonnets. Now, Elizabeth's taste and Mr. Sumner's connexion"——

"She has no money, Edward,—she has no money."

"Neither had she, sir, two years ago, when, in consequence of Master Arthur's rashly venturing upon ice too weak to bear his weight, I had the first happiness of being of use to her and her young charge. Mine is no love of yesterday; no concealed or clandestine attachment. We have met openly at the institution lectures; have walked together on summer evenings. Mr. Sumner, without any verbal recognition of our engagement, has yet often, after church on a Sunday, virtually sanctioned it, by smiling, and significant invitations to accompany Elizabeth and the children to his house; nay, even you your-

self, by your manner of speaking to her and of her, have led me to believe that you considered her as a daughter. You are too keen an observer, too kind and careful a father, not to have seen the state of my affections; and I had thought you too wise and too liberal, to set a little paltry money in competition with the happiness of a whole life, or to wish me to break my plighted troth to one whom I dearly love—to one who loves me—and marry I know not whom, for the sake of adding needless pelf to our already flourishing fortunes. I had thought your only son was dearer to you than money. But I was mistaken—you hold my honour and my happiness at no higher price than this gaud." And he threw from him in bitterness of spirit the roll of ribbon which he had been so busily folding and unfolding.

The pen dropped from the father's hand.

"You *are* mistaken, Edward," said he,

in a low voice, which was interrupted for a moment by a sound well known to the inhabitants of Belford—the deep hoarse cry of "Shoes! old shoes!—shoes! old shoes!" from beneath the window.

"You are mistaken, my dear son, not in my feelings, but in my circumstances. The fortunes of the poor half-starved wretch who is calling 'shoes' through the wintry snow, are more flourishing than mine. Without your aid I am a bankrupt."

Another hoarse deep cry of "Shoes! old shoes!—shoes to buy! shoes to sell!—shoes! old shoes!" gave to the agitated father the pause which his feelings required. His son was too much absorbed in astonishment and horror for speech; he could only listen in silent agony to a story which seemed to him rather like a frightful dream than a stern and waking reality. Mr. Morris continued:—

"You were too young when your blessed

mother died, to remember her distinctly; and her poor sisters, gentle and amiable as they were, inherited rather her delicacy of constitution than her vigour of mind. Far above me in birth, in education, and in cultivation, she was left destitute at the age of seventeen, by the improvidence and the sudden death of her father, a beneficed clergyman; and I owed the blessing of her hand chiefly to her desire to procure for her twin brother a home and a protector. Before our marriage, she made me promise to treat William Arnot as my own younger brother, as my own eldest son; to be to him as a friend, a guardian, a father; and of this most solemn promise she requested the renewal upon her death-bed. Heaven and you, my son, pardon me if I have kept it but too faithfully! Let me make short work of this wretched matter. I placed him as clerk in a banking house in the city, where, as you know, he rose to be

cashier. I and another friend of my family were his securities, and all seemed fair and prosperous. Three months ago, he came to me in an agony of guilt and despair. He had been speculating in the share-market. He had embezzled a large sum belonging to the firm, and, unless it were replaced by a certain day, his liberty, his character, his life—for never, he swore, would he survive the loss of reputation—were destroyed. Could I hesitate? Even had I abandoned him to his fate, I was equally ruined, since the house would have come upon me and upon the friend who, at my pressing instance, had joined me as his bondsman, to indemnify them for their loss. The sum was, to a man in my station, enormous, exceeding, by some thousands, the earnings and savings of the five-and-twenty years that I have passed in business. The deficiency was, however, raised for me, within the stipulated time, by our

friendly solicitor, Mr. Byrne, who happened to have, at the moment, a client, willing to lend the money upon my personal security, and this house, with the stock and furniture. I gave him a bill of sale on all my effects; and was considering whether or not to break the matter to you, or to go on upon credit, and leave the result to time, when Mr. Byrne made me, two days ago, a most unexpected overture, from the friends of a young person with a portion of £1,000, who, although informed of my difficulties, was yet willing to marry her to you, willing to pay off the debt, requiring nothing but a settlement of the rest of the money, and such an arrangement as to partnership, as I should have been, under any circumstances, but too happy to enter into. I have not seen her —I do not even know her name; but she is, they tell me, young, well-educated, and

amiable, a thoroughly good and exemplary girl."

"Oh, my father, do with me as you like! But, yet, Elizabeth!—dear, dear Elizabeth!"

"You would rather, then, be poor and happy with her whom you love. So be it, my dear son. Go to your Elizabeth. See if she be willing to share your poverty; willing to wait until some prospect may arise, that should in some sort, authorize your union. The unhappy man whose imprudence has been our ruin, spoke of one whose defalcation had ruined him, and who might, who probably would hereafter make good the sums for which he was engaged. He has repeated this expectation in a letter which I received from him last week. But that hope is too vague to build upon. See Elizabeth. Disclose to her, unreservedly, the position of affairs—I feel that, with her,

the confidence will be sacred—and then act as you see good. Put me out of the question. I am still strong and healthy, and capable of earning my bread as a shopman."

"O father! never! never!" interrupted Edward, with a sharp and sudden revulsion of feeling. "Even if I were so undutiful, so unnatural, she would not consent; I know she would not. Often and often has she said that she felt that our marriage would never take place; that it never ought to take place; that your son, the son of the most respectable tradesman in Belford, ought not to be united to a poor girl from a charity school. And, now that that union can only be accomplished by depriving you of your home, by sending you in your old age to serve as a hireling—oh, she would never hear of it—would never bear the thought!"

"Go to Elizabeth," repeated Mr. Morris,

in a smothered voice, pressing his son's hands between his, with an energy that betokened the struggle of his feelings—"Go and consult with your Elizabeth." And, as the shopmen and apprentices came flocking in, and the lighted gas gave a glittering brilliancy to the rich and gaily decorated shop, radiant with shawls, and silks, and ribbons, of a hundred varied hues —and a group of customers, gay country ladies, who wished to choose an evening dress by candlelight, appeared at the door —he escaped into the street, with an instinctive desire for solitude, and, almost unconsciously, took the road to St. Michael's rectory.

The lamps in the streets and shops were now burning, and showed with a most striking effect of light and shadow, the fantastic outline of the picturesque old town—the tops of the houses covered with snow, the icicles hanging from the

eaves, and the windows already covered with icy frost-work. The pavement was again alive with passengers—men and women hurrying to the Post-office; flies and carriages gliding, with a sort of dull, rumbling sound, along the snowy road; a stage-coach emptying itself of its freezing passengers at the Red Lion; a man with periwinkles, and a woman with hot chesnuts, each so muffled, the man in a frieze cloak, and the woman in a dreadnaught coat, that it would have puzzled an Œdipus to decide betwixt the he and the she; one little girl lingering longingly in the wake of the periwinkles; two great boys burning their fingers in a bold attempt to filch the burning chesnuts; other children rushing aimlessly along, shouting and bellowing as if to scare the cold. Men were thumping their feet upon the ground, and buffetting their chest with their arms to restore the circulation; women were chattering, dogs

barking, beggars begging, fiddles scraping, bells ringing, knockers tat-tat-tat-ing—in short, all the noises of a wintry evening, in a country town, were in full activity.

From the High Bridge, where the broad, bright river, with its double line of wharfs and houses, crowded with people, its boats and its barges, forms so gay and pretty a moving picture, so full of bustle, and colour of light and of life—from the High Bridge, the Kennett now showed like a mirror, reflecting on its icy surface, with a peculiar broad and bluish shine, the arch of lamps surmounting the graceful airy bridge, and the twinkling lights that glanced, here and there, from boat, or barge, or wharf, or from some uncurtained window that overhung the river.

The snow lay in drifts upon either shore, marking the long perspective, and glanced upon the suburban cottages and the distant country, edging into the gentle uplands,

hardly deserving the name of hills, that closed the prospect, strongly relieved, at the present moment, by the dark and dusky sky. In spite of his distress and pre-occupied mind, poor Edward, who had, probably without knowing it, much of those two rare gifts, the poet's feeling and the painter's eye, could not help stopping a moment, on the centre of the bridge, to contemplate so fine an effect of *chiar'oscuro*, so striking and beautiful a picture, composed almost without colour, by the nice contrast of light and shade.

While he stood admiring the scene, he was overtaken by the old man whom he had heard, a short while previously, crying "Shoes! shoes!" under the window of his father's shop; and whom he had passed just before, whilst engaged in chaffering for some of his commodities with an orange-woman, whose barrow was stationed at the end of the bridge.

The itinerant shoe-merchant was, as I have said, well-known to the inhabitants of Belford by the name of Old Isaac; and, from his name, his calling, his keenness at a bargain, as well as from his quick, black eye, aquiline nose, and a greater proportion of beard than is usually suffered in this good kingdom of England to adorn a Christian countenance, was commonly reputed to be a Jew. He was a spare old man, of the middle height, somewhat stooping, but with a picturesque and richly coloured head, surmounted by an old slouched hat. His patched and faded garments were well-nigh hidden by two enormous bags, in which he carried the old shoes which he bought, and the new ones, or *soi-disant* new—for he was a great man at a *rifacimento*, and had the art to "gar auld *shoon* look maist as guid 's the new"—which he sold.

"Buy a pair of warm slippers, master,

this cold night," quoth Isaac. "Wedding slippers, fine enough for a lord."

"Nothing, this evening," said Edward.

"Have 'em a bargain, master," persisted the man of shoes.

"I am not in want of any," rejoined Edward, moving on.

"Wedding shoes, then?—wedding boots? Must buy somewhat," continued the vender, pertinaciously keeping up with our friend's rapid steps, and thrusting before his eyes the articles which he named.

"I tell you that I want neither wedding slippers, nor wedding shoes, nor any of your commodities," answered Edward, with some humour, endeavouring to escape from his pursuer.

"Don't ye!" exclaimed Isaac, with a knowing twinkle of his keen black eye. "Don't ye! Well, then, buy for the want that's to come. I've set my heart upon

having a bit of a deal with ye to-night, and shan't mind bating a penny or two, rather than balk my fancy. You shall have 'em under prime cost," continued Isaac, coaxingly; "you shall have 'em for next to nothing. Do ye have 'em! We must have a deal. You'll see that you'll be married sooner than you think for. Your time's coming. So you may as well buy the wedding slippers at once. What do you bid for 'em? Make an offer."

"Not a farthing, Jew. I am in haste. You need not untie the bag. You have nothing that I would take if you would give it me. Let me pass on. I am not going to be married. I want nothing of you."

"Don't be too sure of that, Master Edward Morris. You and I may come to a deal yet. Jew, quotha! No more a Jew than yourself. If your eyes were not turned another way, you might see me in

the aisle of St. Michael's Church every Sunday morning and afternoon, as regular as yourself. Jew! 'Tis an extraordinary compliment you idle folk pay to that tramping race, that, whenever you meet a body who takes care of the main chance, and turns an honest penny, you call him a Jew. Well, Master Edward, you'll see that you'll come to me for your wedding slippers." And, so saying, Isaac shouldered his bag again, and left the path free.

At another moment, Edward would have smiled at the old man's acute observation of the direction of his glances in church, and at his persevering endeavour to attract a customer, founded upon that observation; but his thoughts were too painfully divided between his father and his mistress—his duty and his love; and, during his rapid walk to St. Michael's rectory, he could only resolve to be guided in all things by the judgment and the feeling of Elizabeth.

She received her lover with the gentle self-possession, the calm and serious sweetness, which characterised her manner, and which had been partly, perhaps, the cause, partly the result of the confidence placed in her by Mr. Sumner. His father had, to suit his purpose, forced himself to advert to her situation and her origin in his conversation with his son; but Edward felt proudly that there was no trace of the charity school or of the servants' hall in the lovely woman who stood before him, with a simple and unaffected propriety—in a higher rank it would have been termed dignity—that would have beseemed a palace. His distress was immediately visible to her, and her anxious inquiries served to introduce his story.

"We must part, Edward; as to that there can be neither doubt nor question," said she, in a low, steady voice, whilst the tears trembled on the long fringes of her large black eyes, and the rich colour went

and came on the finely-turned cheeks and lips, which a sculptor would have been proud to model. "We must part. I have always known that it would be so—always felt, without suspecting or dreaming of this obstacle, that Mr. Morris would find an insuperable objection to receiving me into his family. I ought, perhaps, knowing that, to have forbidden your visits. But I was encouraged in my attachment by one whom I am bound to obey, and by whose orders I have acted in this business; and my own feelings led me but too readily into the error. Oh, if it were only for ourselves, this poverty would be nothing! Young, active, accustomed to exertion, it would be delightful to labour with you and for you—delightful to feel that there was no superiority on your side, except that of your respectable connexions, and your manly and vigorous character. But your father—your kind and excellent

father!—to tear him from his home, to send him in his old age to serve as an hireling—he, so long accustomed to respect and consideration!—to banish him from his friends, his neighbours, his native town! We must not think of it. The sacrifice must be made. And you will find your happiness, dear Edward—we shall find our happiness—in his restored comfort, and in the consciousness of having done our duty."

Affectionate son as Edward was, and determined as he had professed himself to abide by the decision of his mistress, he could not refrain from combating this resolution. She listened to him with sweet and mournful attention, as if willing to hear all that he had to say; but her determination was unshaken. She had just asked—

"Since we must part, dearest Edward, were it not wiser to shorten this pain?"

when an odd-looking little note was delivered to her.

Elizabeth read the contents once, twice, thrice, and remained silent and perplexed, as if hardly comprehending the meaning.

"It is very strange!" exclaimed she, thinking aloud, and forgetting that she was not alone; "very strange! What can he want at this hour?"

"He!" exclaimed Edward, jealous (so strange a thing is a lover's heart) of her whom he was upon the very point of resigning. "He!—what he? From whom comes that note?"

"From one who must be apprised of this event."

"Not, surely, from Mr. Sumner? No; from him it cannot be. But from whom? Who can have the power so to absorb your attention at such a moment?"

Elizabeth paused an instant, and then said, gently—"Come with me, and you

shall know. Although we are doomed to part, to meet no more, you must always be amongst the most valued, the most cherished of my friends. I cannot afford to lose your good opinion. Come with me, and you shall know all."

She tied on her bonnet, wrapped herself in a large cloak, and they passed through the rectory garden into the churchyard. The fine old Gothic building, with its grey cloisters, its graceful porch, its towers, and its steeple, rose in sombre grandeur from the graveyard, covered with snow, by which it was surrounded, the summit almost lost in the frosty mists of the air; so that the imagination added to the actual height, gave a cathedral-like grandeur to the edifice. A few yews and cypresses were clustered in one corner, and a row of stately limes, their larger limbs partially covered with snow, which lay in long intersecting lines, defining the forms of the

branches, led to an iron gate, which opened into a narrow lane, leading to one of the poorest and least populous suburbs of the town. Along this lane Elizabeth passed, sedulously attended by Edward.

"I ought to have told you before," said she, in a low voice—"only he whom it most concerns forbade the disclosure, and Mr. Sumner, I hardly know why, coincided in his desire—that, although a charity girl, I am not, as you have thought, an orphan. I have a father, a most fond and affectionate father, one whom I love dearly, and who dearly loves me. He is a poor but industrious man, following a mean occupation; not so poor but that he makes me frequent presents, and is most kind and generous to the widow in whose cottage he lives, and whom he mainly supports. Still, I have always felt that he was not fit to be your father, nor to be connected so closely with a man so intelligent, so well-educated, and so respectable in station as

Mr. Morris. I always felt that something would prevent our union. And so, alas! it has turned out."

By this time the clouds had so far cleared away as to admit glimpses of a keen and frosty moon, which shed a cold, pale, desolate light upon every object; dwelling with tenfold desolation on a small hovel, whose rugged thatch and windows stuffed with rags, as well as the broken-down state of the little gate, (ajar perforce, since, hanging by one hinge, it would neither shut nor open,) which led into the narrow front court, betokened the most sordid poverty.

Up this court Elizabeth passed; and, knocking, with, as it seemed, a forced resolution, at a low door, in little better condition than the gate which formed the outer barricade, was immediately admitted by an infirm old woman into a dark and dismal kitchen.

"I look for your father every minute,

Miss Betsy," quoth the tottering crone, "for 'tis past his time o' coming in; and, if ye'll wait till I strike a light, ye may walk into his room, and I'll kindle ye a bit o' fire; for you tender lasses, that live in grand houses, can't bear the cold like us poor folk that be used to nothing better."

And, so saying, she fumbled out an old tinder-box, and having, with some difficulty, cherished a spark into a flame—for her old and withered hand, and feeble breath, seemed numbed and chilled by the cold which she defied so manfully—she lighted a wretched candle, led the way into the next apartment—and endeavoured, with a little damp straw, and a few dirty chips, that had evidently been long trodden under foot in some carpenter's yard, to produce, in a small rusty grate, from which the brickwork was breaking away, something as nearly approaching to

a blaze as the state of the fireplace and the nature of the fuel would allow.

Edward, in the meanwhile, took a mournful survey of the sordid abode, contrasting so strongly with the appearance, the mind, and the manners of the lovely and graceful woman who stood beside him, the beloved of his heart. The hearth and its appointments—the bit of old iron that served as a poker, the broken dustpan that officiated as shovel, the pipkin upon two legs, and the lipless pint cup which did duty as kettle, pot, and saucepan—this niggard and beggarly hearth was but a type of the rugged and scanty plenishing of the comfortless chamber. A jointstool, a rickety table, and two tumble-down chairs, one of them garnished with a cushion, darned, patched, and mended, until mending was no longer possible, figured in the centre of the uneven, bricked floor; over the chimney, was a mug with-

out a handle, a teapot curtailed of its fair proportions by the loss of half a spout, a teacup and saucer of different patterns, and two or three plates and basins, all more or less cracked, and repaired, not very artistically, with putty and white paint. In one corner was the inmate's humble bed—a chaff mattress, with one or two rugs or horse-cloths, much the worse for wear; in another, the little pile of straw, and chips, and rotten sticks, from whence the fuel now smoking rather than burning in the chimney had been selected; and, in a third, a dingy heap of old shoes.

The old woman, satisfied with her labour, retired to her part of the dwelling. Elizabeth was the first to break the pause which succeeded her departure.

"This, Edward, is the abode of my father—of a father whom, in spite of all that surrounds us, I have good cause to love. Does not the sight of such misery serve to

reconcile you to the destiny that parts us? Such, at least, is the effect which it ought to have—which it has on me. I am not fit to belong to your family. Never should I have cherished such a thought. Strange that Mr. Sumner, knowing as he did the whole truth, should have encouraged our attachment! Strange, most strange, that, till now, the name and the existence of my father should have remained a secret! Well! my presumption is fitly punished, and you will turn with a freer heart to one more worthy to share your home and possess your affections."

"Say not so, my own Elizabeth! Were it not for my paramount duty to my own most kind and excellent father, all that I see here would but supply a fresh motive for our union. All speaks of poverty and industry—nothing of crime. And, next to the joy of offering you a comfortable home, should I reckon that of rescuing one so

near and dear to you from penury and toil. Oh! that I were now the free agent that I thought myself yesterday! Not another night should your father spend beneath this roof. If my wretched uncle, Arnott, could but know the misery that his wild spirit of speculation has brought upon us all!"

"If he could, Master Edward, I am minded that he'd rather cry old shoes than gamble in the share market," quoth our friend Isaac, advancing into the room; depositing, with considerable care, his two bags of shoes in their appropriate corner, and emptying, with equal readiness, divers rotten sticks, fir apples, and stumps of gorse, gathered during his day's travel—for apparently he had wended countryward—from the several pockets of his nondescript garments. "If these Stock-Exchange gamblers could but tell the sore hearts they cause to their friends and kindred,

mayhap it might go nigh to reform 'em,' pursued Isaac. "So here you be, Master Edward, come to make a deal, as I prophesied; and ye ha' brought Bess wi' ye, to clinch the bargain. So much the better. Gie me a kiss, Bess. So thou be'st come to help Master Edward to choose his wedding slippers—eh, my girl?" And the old man nodded his head, with a knowing wink, and chuckled—"Come to choose the wedding slippers!"

"Alas, my dear father, you little know," —— began Elizabeth.

"Alack and alack, wench! No alacks for me. I do know all the story; ay, and a great deal besides, that neither of you know, wise as ye think yourselves. Come, my good boy and girl, sit ye down here by the fire. Bess looks as white as the snow on the house-top; and thou, Master Edward, art not much better. Sit down, and make yourselves comfortable.

I'll tell you all about it." And the old shoe-merchant drew his two chairs to either side of his little fire, seated himself upon a stool in the middle, flung on fresh fuel, breaking the sticks with his withered hands, and did the honours of his small apartment with much hospitality. "Well, Master Morris, for all I cry old shoes about the streets, and my Bess (heaven bless her sweet face!) was brought up at a charity school, it ain't altogether for want of a bit of money. Many a year have I been scraping and scraping, and hoarding and hoarding, to save her a portion; and I told her and Mr. Sumner not to let out that she had a father, just for the pleasure of the surprise like. So, in the meantime, comes this affair of Master Arnott. Ay, better cry old shoes than go gambling in shares. So I happened to have the money, waiting for a good security—nothing like turning an honest penny—just when Mas-

ter Byrne was wanting it for your father. So I lets him have it. Here's the paper, see—what-d'ye-call't?—the bill of sale. And I offered him my girl, with £15,000 to her portion; not letting out who she was. And here I've just got a letter from him to Master Byrne, saying as how 'twill break your heart to marry her; not thinking, mind, that she's she. And I s'pose as how you are come to say that you won't have her, 'cause o' your father—eh? So she's refused o' both hands—eh, Bess? Well! I love a good father, and I love a good son; he'll be sure to make a good husband. And, if Bess don't make thee a good wife, my lad, there's no faith in woman. So take her!—and take this bit o' paper; that's ten thousand pounds: and there's five thousand that I promised," continued he, going to one of his corner heaps, and taking a couple of dirty bank notes out of an old shoe, "and another that

I give, 'cause of these two refusals. A good father makes a good son, and a good son 'll make a good husband. And I've heard to-day, from a real Jew, who knows a good deal of what goes on on 'Change, that Master Arnott is likely to get his money back again. So now off wi' ye to Master Morris, and tell him the news. And, hark ye, my boy, don't forget to come back for the Wedding Slippers!'

THE BUCCANEER.

"It is a poison tempered by himself."

SHAKSPEARE.

"NAY, I know that the Stormy Petrel is as pretty a boat, and manned by as stout a crew, as ever sailed among the green islands of the Carib Sea, or coasted the bays and headlands of the main; but a man's heart is made of flesh, Senor Captain, albeit it sail under the black flag, and even your wild sea rovers may

not be able to resist the smooth tongue of this varlet. It is a soft spoken youth, I tell thee. Give him three inches of cold steel as soon as he boards thee, and fling him off into the waves. The deep sea tells no tales."

"As thou wilt!" returned the Buccaneer, with a slight curl of his thin lip, and a glance, from whose strange mixture of gaiety and scorn the haughty Spaniard involuntarily shrunk. "As thou wilt! I had destined his ghost to the honour of guarding my own private hoard, buried in the sand on an island that shall be nameless. But 'tis easy to carry off some captive for that purpose, for he must be slain on the spot, observe, to be ready for the performance of his duty."

And now, so far as looks might go, the Planter's scornful sneer,—for he understood rightly, that however glossed over by levity, the superstition was a real

feeling,—retorted the ill-dissembled contempt of the Pirate Captain.

"Since thou mistrustest the tender mercy of my dare-devils, Black Juan of Cales with his stiletto, or the Bohemian giant Brandt, with his boar spear, shall put him out of pain or ever he sets foot on the deck of the Stormy Petrel. The stab shall come before the fear. But how are we to make prize of him, Senor Don Pedro? Thou wouldst not have me send a boat's crew to carry him off bodily from thine own plantation! I see that the little boat is still at the cove by the creek:—Canst thou not deliver him thyself into our hands?"

"Not for all the silver of Mexico! Donna Gonsalva already misdoubts that I love not her favourite page. She knows too ——. No, good Gervase," continued Don Pedro, checking himself; "I must not be seen in this matter. I must des-

patch Antonio to the Petrel in the little boat, an hour or two before sunset, whilst I myself remain at San Isidro, and in full sight of my whole household. He will come alone. Contrive to return the boat to its moorings; and hark ye, thou hast flags of all nations—hoist the red cross of St. George at the mast-head as soon as the deed be done. He will come alone, and without token. *There* is thy warrant," added the Spaniard, taking a heavy purse from his girdle, and tossing it to the pirate; "there is thy warrant. And now, the sooner we put land and sea between us, the safer for both."

"Coward!" thought the bold sea rover, as each turned to pursue his separate way. "Insolent coward! the red cross of St. George, the ensign of England, to announce a deed like this! The craven is liberal, however," muttered he to himself, poising the purse of doubloons, after a

moment's pause. "Fear is a special paymaster. Well, his job shall be done; my trusty mate, Miles Bertrand, shall manage it, whilst I row stealthily to my own little desert island, and add this gold to my secret hoard. Miles knows no Spanish, so that pleading and remonstrance will stead the poor wretch naught; and, in good sooth, that rugged mate of ours will have no more remorse in striking down the solitary boatman than I have in crushing this beetle. 'Tis a foul deed, after all; but yon craven Spaniard must answer it."

Thus mused the Captain of the Stormy Petrel, as he strode with hasty steps towards the shore. The half-expressed thoughts of his late companion, as he bent his way inland, were not a jot more flattering.

"Ruffian!"—so ran his soliloquy—"scoffing, mercenary ruffian, and artful as mercenary; for had I consented to ac-

company Antonio, who shall say how the visit might have ended? And yet," continued he, more calmly, "of such tools doth a wise man make the instruments that shape his fortunes. To be fairly rid of this young Antonio, now too, that, if I read her rightly, Gonsalva hath discovered all; and now that the speedy arrival of the Governor at Vera Cruz will take my fairest cousin from my ward, robbing me at one stroke of beauty and of wealth, of living and of love! Why, it is such a necessity that, if the Pirate had demanded a statue of pure gold to guard his island treasure, the robber must have had it. Well, I have only now to find Senor Antonio, despatch him on some feigned errand to the Petrel, and be careful to keep in view of the whole household until vespers be past. I marvel if the masts of the schooner be visible from the portico of San Isidro, or whether I must ascend the roof.

The red cross flag will glitter afar. I must make good speed to find Antonio." And quickening his pace, he hastened silently towards the plantation.

The spot where these two worthies had held discourse of life and death, deliberately plotting the murder of an unoffending and innocent fellow-creature, was one of the most beautiful on the beautiful shores of Spanish America. A clear and sparkling rivulet gushed from the foot of a tall rock, overhung by the luxuriant and splendid creepers of the tropics, a grove of feathery palms yielded their long foliage to the sway of the western gale, mingling their murmur with the pleasant sound of running waters, and adding by their delicious shade to the perpetual freshness and verdure of the grassy margin of the spring. Flowers of every hue hung from the grey crag and the lofty palm trees, or enamelled the turfs ground, whilst birds

and insects, gorgeous as flowers, flitted from blossom to blossom, or basked in the fervid beams of noon. How could evil thoughts and evil deeds spring into life in such a scene!

A few hours had passed away since the interview which I have attempted to describe, and now the evening sun shone upon herb, and flower, and flowering tree, illumining with a diamond-like radiance the clear waters of the fountain, and bathing in a flood of light the lovely creature who stood upon its brink. She was gazing upon a miniature which she held in her hand, gazing so intently, that she started to hear her own name, although the speaker in following her thither did but obey her mandate.

"Donna Gonsalva!" said the page.

"Antonio!" responded his fair mistress; "Antonio, are we alone? Art thou sure that we are alone—that none can see or

hear us—above all, that my stern and haughty cousin, my servant, as he calls himself,—my master, for so I have long felt him to be,—is at safe distance? Dangerous were it, past all danger, if he should hear that which I have to tell. Where is Don Pedro, Antonio?"

"I left him writing even now at the house, dear lady. He hath sent me on an errand to the trader in the roadstead, to bring from the vessel certain rich stuffs, which he would, he said, have rowed ashore himself, had he not been engaged preparing letters for Madrid. He enjoined me to use despatch, and I should be already in a little boat, had not Inez conveyed to me your command to meet you here. You tremble, dearest lady; your colour comes and goes. Is their aught in which the poor Antonio can stead his sweet mistress? Hath any man dared to grieve you?"

"Nay, dear Antonio, this emotion springs from joy, not grief. I weep I know not why. Dost thou recognize this picture?"

"Full surely. It is the portrait of my honoured lord, your noble father."

"And dost thou remember, children as we were, how he sent for us to stand beside his dying bed, and kissed and blessed us, and bade us love each other? Oh, thou dost, thou dost—I see thou dost! None knew thy parentage. Thou wast called an orphan—a poor orphan; and Don Pedro, when he took possession of this rich plantation of San Isidro, calling himself my guardian, and claiming me as his destined bride, would fain have sent thee to a monastery, to college, to the army—anywhere away from me; but our childish love was proof against threat or artifice. We would not be parted, and you remained at San Isidro as my page—mine own dear and loving page. Oh, An-

tonio! our love was an instinct. Prepare for a strange happiness. Looking to-day at this portrait, given to me on his death-bed by my father, I touched a spring, the back flew open and discovered a letter. Prepare thyself for happiness incredible, for joy past all joy, my Antonio! That letter—thou know'st that my mother died in the hour that I was born—that letter told of a secret marriage, during a brief sojourn immediately after her death in the country of his ancestors; a marriage to one of humbler fortunes, the daughter of a soldier of old Spain. She, too, gave birth to a child, and shortly after died. Antonio, dear Antonio! canst thou not guess the rest? Thou art that child —my brother, dear Antonio! the rightful heir of San Isidro. My brother—Oh, what joy is in the name! Mine own dear brother! Wilt thou not speak to me, Antonio?

"Gonsalva, sweetest sister!"—and the

happy brother and sister were locked in each other's arms.

"We must be cautious for a short space, dear brother!" said Gonsalva, raising herself at length from Antonio's tearful embrace. "We must be cautious awhile, or our grasping kinsman, who, as our father's heir male, and as my guardian and destined husband, has hitherto enjoyed the revenues of this princely estate, would scruple no artifice to retain it. I tremble lest my emotion at the discovery may have awakened his suspicions. Our calmness must quiet them. We shall not long need to dissimulate. Our powerful kinsman, the Conde Almarida, is already on his way to Vera Cruz. We will put these letters into his hands the moment of his arrival. His authority, as governor, will be absolute. There will be no difficulty in proving the marriage. Father Ignatius, of the Dominicans of Seville, performed

the ceremony. I tell thee, Antonio, thou shalt be recognized as heir of San Isidro! as mine own dear brother! How proud I am of the name! and now, away with thee! We must not awaken suspicion,—'till to-morrow, farewell."

"Farewell, then, sweetest sister! Sweetest and most beloved? What grief it is to leave thee even for one night! Most beloved and most generous Gonsalva, fare-thee-well."

"Generous!—say selfish, dear Antonio. Wilt thou not save me from a hated marriage? Am I not rich in a thrice-dear brother? Generous, indeed! but this is no time for chiding. Thou must away; hasten to perform thine errand; delay no longer." And they parted.

The fair Gonsalva, full of a generous and overflowing contentment, took the shortest path towards the plantation; while Antonio, scarcely recovered from the bewilder-

ing joy and astonishment of her communications, obeyed half mechanically the wave of the hand by which she had indicated that his way led to the sea-shore.

The sudden and impressive sense of happiness, so perfect and so exquisite, seemed, like some enchanting dream, too bright to last. That he, the poor and homeless orphan, the child of charity, with no friend save his dear lady, should be the son of honourable parents; the brother of that sweet and gracious creature,—privileged to love and protect her,—to forestall her every wish,—to make for her such sacrifices as she had joyfully made for him,—to prove himself worthy of the blood of which he sprung—worthy to wield the knightly sword of his fathers!—such thoughts swelled his heart almost to bursting. He longed to pour out his whole soul in prayer and thanksgiving; and suddenly pausing as he wound among the rocks, he saw just above him a stone cross,

shining brightly in the last rays of the setting sun, and struck into an upward path which led to a small chapel on the top of the cliff, built and endowed by his father Don Roderigo Hernandez, partly in gratitude to the Virgin for an escape from shipwreck, and partly to serve as a beacon on that dangerous coast. Beneath was the shallow cavern in which Don Pedro's boat lay moored; and so close as to be within hail from the shore was the Stormy Petrel, the Pirate vessel.

Prostrate before the shrine of the Virgin Mother, absorbed in prayer and pious meditation, Antonio found the spirit-calm which he wanted. Time had passed by unnoted; and he was roused from his devotions by a rapid step below.

"No signal!" muttered Don Pedro, as he loosened the boat from its moorings. "No red-cross flag! He must have reached the schooner long ago. Hath the pirate

villain played me false? Shall I hail him? No;—I'll row to the ship and learn the truth at once."

By the time Antonio had descended the steep and rugged pathway that led from the chapel to the shore, Don Pedro, putting his whole strength to the oars, had reached the vessel. Apparently he was expected there. The Stormy Petrel lay defined in strong relief against the bright but transient glow of a tropical sunset. Two figures stood at the gangway, and as the Spaniard mounted the ship's side, a boar spear and a stiletto entered his body. The horror-stricken page saw the steel gleam, and heard the heavy plunge as the corpse dropped into the reddening wave. The murderer had fallen by his own engine.

"This even handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips."

NOTE.—The leading incident of Schiller's beautiful ballad of Fridolin, a good deal altered, will be recognised in this story. Ah! those great Poets who lived before us—they stole all our best ideas.

THE VILLAGE AMANUENSIS.

"Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid—
Some banished lover."—POPE.

TAP! went a modest, timid, shy-sounding knock against the old-fashioned oaken door of William Marshall's domicile, in the brief twilight of a September evening—the hour of all others in which a pretty young woman might, with the least risk of observation, pay a visit to a handsome bachelor—the best hour to shield her from

the attacks of village gossipry, or to cover her own confusion, should her errand be such as to challenge something like a jest on the part of her host.

Tap! tap! again went the slender forefinger; but although the reiterated summons was a thought louder than the first nearly inaudible demand for admittance, it was equally unsuccessful in arousing the attention of the master of the dwelling.

For this abstraction there was a reason which the young and tender-hearted will admit to be valid: the poor youth was in love, and to enhance that calamity he had quarrelled with the mistress of his affections.

William Marshall, at the time of which I write, schoolmaster of Aberleigh, the only son of one of the poorest widows in the parish, was a person of great merit. Some quickness and much industry had given him a degree of information and re-

finement unusual in his station, and his excellent conduct and character had secured the friends whom his talents had attracted. In short, he was one of those instances—more frequent than the grumblers of the world are willing to admit—which prove that even in this life desert is pretty certain to meet its reward.

The ancient pedagogue of the village, a man of some learning, who availed himself of the large and airy schoolhouse to add boarders aspiring to the accomplishments of mathematics and the classics, to the sturdy country lads, whom, by the will of the founder, he was bound to instruct in reading and writing, declared that this his darling scholar caught up, untaught and unflogged, all that he painfully endeavoured to instil, by book and birch, into the fortunate pupils whose fathers were rich enough to pay for teaching and whipping; and he followed up this decla-

ration not only by installing him, at the early age of seventeen, into the post of his assistant, but by recommending him so warmly to the trustees as his successor, that at his death, which occurred about six years after, William Marshall, in spite of his youth, was unanimously elected to fill the place of his old master, and took possession of the pretty house upon School Green, with its two noble elms in front; as well as of the large garden, orchard, and meadow, which the brook, after crossing the green, and being in turn crossed by the road and the old ivied bridge, went cranking round so merrily, clear, bright, and rapid as ever rolled rivulet.

Now this, besides its pleasantness as a residence, formed a position which, considering the difference of the age and times, might be reckoned, for our modest scholar, full as good as the magnificent proffer of the green gown, cow's grass, and

four merks a-year, made by the good Abbot Boniface to Halbert Glendinning,* and by the said Halbert Glendinning, to the unspeakable astonishment and scandal of the assistants, unceremoniously rejected; since, in addition to the stipend paid regularly as quarter-day came round, and the prospect of as many boarders as the house would hold, was the probable contingency of the tax-gathering and rate-collecting, the timber-valuing and land-measuring, which usually fall to the share of the schoolmaster; together with the reversion of the office of parish-clerk, provided always, that for a "master of scholars,"† who taught Latin and Greek and took boarders, such office were not held *infra dig.*

William Marshall's humble wishes were

* *Vide* "The Monastery."

† "A scholar, sir! I was a master of scholars."—*Lingo, in the "Agreeable Surprise."*

gratified. He was a happy man; for, in addition to the comfort of having a respectable home for the infirm mother to whom he had always been a most exemplary son, he had the gratification (so at least said the gossips of Aberleigh) of preparing a suitable abode for one of the best and prettiest of the village maidens.

Ever since the days of Pyramus and Thisbe, proximity has been known for the friend of love; and such was probably the case in the present instance, since Lucy Wilmot, the object of William Marshall's passion, was his next neighbour, the brook of which we have made honourable mention being the sole barrier by which her father's meadows were divided from the garden and orchard of the school.

A more beautiful boundary was never seen than that clear babbling stream, which went wandering in and out, at "its own sweet will," with such infinite variety

of margin: now fringed with alders, now tufted with hawthorn and hazel, now rising into a steep bank crowned with a giant oak flinging its broad arms across the waters, the reflection of its rich indented foliage broken by the frequent dropping of a smooth acorn from its dimpled cup; now sloping gently down into a verdant bay enamelled with flowers of all hues, the intensely blue forget-me-not half hidden under the light yellow clusters of the cross-leaved bedstraw, while the purple spikes of the willow-herb waved amidst the golden chalices of the loosestrife, and large patches of the feathery meadow-sweet, the heliotrope of the fields, spread its almond-like fragrance and its pale and feathery beauty to the very centre of the stream, overhanging the snowy blossoms of the water-lily as they rose from their deep green leaves, and mingling with that most remarkable of the many sedges

that border our English rivers, whose flowers, placed so regularly on either side of their tall stalks, resemble balls of ebony thickly set with ivory spikes. Certainly, of all possible methods of dividing or uniting persons and property, this bright and cheerful stream seemed the most propitious to social intercourse, as William and Lucy found by experience.

The green in front of the schoolhouse formed a commodious natural playground for the children, sufficiently near for safety, and yet wide enough for all their sports, the noble game of cricket included: so that those sharp little eyes which love so dearly to pry into the weaknesses of their elders, especially when those elders assume the double relation of ruler and perceptor, were, during the intervals of tuition, happily engaged elsewhere; and really nobody, except perhaps a lover, would believe how attentive William Marshall became to

the cow which was tethered in the orchard, how punctual in culling himself all the fruit and vegetables needed from the garden, how assiduous, above all, in watering his mother's little flower-pot sloping down to the stream; whilst on her part it was at least equally remarkable how often Lucy Wilmot found cause to fill her pail at the brook, or to feed the ducks, geese, chickens, and turkeys, which she had dislodged from their old home, the farm-yard, to establish by the water side. Never was poultry so zealously looked after. It happened to be a dry summer; and it stands upon record at the Brook Farm that Lucy volunteered to fetch all the water wanted for domestic use by the whole family. "To be sure," as her sisters would laughingly observe, "they had sometimes to wait for it, especially if it were towards dinner-time, or before breakfast, or after school broke up." And then Lucy would

blush, and declare that she would never go near the place again; and then, by way of keeping her word, she would take up her little basket of barley, and run across the meadow to feed her chickens.

Halcyon days were these. What a charming spot for a rural flirtation was that mirror-like stream! What tender words floated across it! What smiles and blushes looked brightly down into the bright waters! And of how many of the small gifts, the graceful homages in which love delights, was that clear brook the witness! From the earliest violet to the latest rose, from the first blushing cherry to the Katherine pear, rich and ruddy as Lucy's own round healthful cheek, not an offering escaped the assiduity of the devoted lover. Halcyon days were these to our friend William, when an affliction befel him in the very scene of his happiness—a shadow fell across the sunshine of his love,

so hideous and gloomy as to darken his whole future prospects, to sadden and embitter his very life. Like many other swift and sudden poisons, nothing could be more innocent in appearance than this implement of mischief, which wore the quiet and unoffending form of an unopened letter.

Hovering one day by the side of the stream, waiting with a basket of filberts, "brown as the squirrel whose teeth crack them," as Fletcher has it—filberts firm, juicy, and fragrant, the first of season —waiting until the close of evening should bring his Lucy to tend her poultry under the great oak—he saw a letter on the grass, and springing from bank to bank on a spot a little higher up, where the brook was sufficiently narrow to admit of this sort of lover's leap, he stooped for the paper, suspecting, sooth to say, that it might be some billet-doux of his own, with

the design of returning it to the fair owner. His it was not. On the contrary, the epistle was sealed with a pretty device of doves drinking from the same shallow bowl—an imitation of the exquisite doves of the Vatican—which he himself had given to Lucy, his first pledge of love, and directed in her well-known hand to

MR. WILLATTS,
at the Red Boot,
Bristol Street,
Belford.

Well did William Marshall know this Mr. Willatts! Well did he know and heartily did he despise this dandy of the Red Boot, who—slim, civil, and simpering, all rings and chains, smirks and grimaces, curls and essences—skipped about in his secondhand coxcombry, as if the vending of earthly boots and shoes were too gross for so ethereal a personage, and glass-slipper maker to Cinderella were his fitting desig-

nation! William always had disliked him, in virtue of the strong antipathy which opposite holds to opposite; and now to see a letter to him directed by Lucy,—his Lucy—sealed too with that seal! "But she would explain it! of course she would! she must, she should explain what motive she could have for writing to such a creature as that, after confessing her love for him, after all had been arranged between her father and himself, and everything was prepared for their marriage before the ensuing Christmas. He had a right to demand an explanation, and ought not to be content with any thing short of the most ample and satisfactory account of the whole matter."

Just as he had worked himself up to the very climax of angry suspicion, his fair mistress, with her eyes cast down upon the grass, evidently in search of the lost letter, advanced slowly towards the spot. She

started when she saw him, and when he presented the epistle, with a greeting in the true spirit of the above soliloquy, in which a stern and peremptory demand for explanation was mingled with an ironical and contemptuous congratulation upon the correspondent whom she had chosen, her answer, between confusion at the discovery, indignation at the jealousy so openly avowed, and astonishment at the high tone taken by one who had hitherto shown nothing but the gentlest tenderness, displayed so much displeasure, vexation, and embarrassment, that the dialogue grew rapidly into a quarrel, and ended in a formal separation between the lovers. Each party returned home angry and grieved. William most angry, if we may judge from his sending the unlucky filberts, basket and all, floating down the stream; Lucy most grieved, if the crumpled letter and defaced address so nearly washed out by her tears that it

required all the skill and experience of the Belford postmaster to decipher the legend, may be accepted as evidence.

In spite, however, of this token of her fond relenting, the first tidings that William Marshall heard of Lucy, were that she had gone on a visit to her godmother, twenty miles off. William, on his part, staid at home instructing his pupils as well as he could. In spite of lovers' quarrels the work of the world goes on. To be sure the poor boys wondered why their master, usually so even-tempered, was so difficult to satisfy; and his fond mother could not comprehend why, when she spoke to him, her son, always so mindful of his only remaining parent, answered at cross purposes. But William, although a lover, was a strong-minded man; and before a week had elapsed he had discovered his own infirmity, and had determined to correct it. Accordingly he

opened his desk, took out the map of an estate which he had just finished measuring before the unlucky adventure of the hero of the Red Boot, and having compared his own mensuration of the different fields with the estimated extent, and completed the necessary calculations, had just relapsed into a reverie, when the interruption occurred which formed the beginning of our little story.

Tap! tap! tap! sounded once again, and this time a little impatiently. Tap! tap! tap!

"Ah, my good cousin Kate!" said William, at last admitting the poor damsel who had waited this unmerciful while at the door, of which detention our lover had, one hardly knows how, a glimmering consciousness: "I hope you have not been long detained! Why did not you knock louder? Do you want my mother? No; or you would not have come to the door

of my little room. You want me, Kate, I see. So tell me at once what I can do for you."

And smiling, blushing, and hesitating, Kate confessed "that she did want her cousin William; that she had a letter ——" (William started and winced at the very sound)—"a letter to write; and she was such a poor scholar, and the friend who used to write her letters was away; so she had come to trouble cousin William."

"No trouble at all, dear Kate!" replied William, recovering from his confusion, and too much occupied with the recollections awakened by the very name of a letter to observe the embarrassment of his pretty visitor; "no trouble at all. Here is my paper ready. Now begin. Is it to your brother in London?"

"Oh, no!" replied the blushing damsel; "not to my brother: to——a friend."

"Very well!" said William. "The days draw in so fast that it will soon be dark. Begin, dear Kate!"

And after a little hesitation, and playing with a folded letter that she held in her hand, Kate, in a very low, hesitating voice, began to dictate: "Dear Francis"——

"Dear Frances," echoed her amanuensis, unsuspectingly, in a still lower tone; then pausing, and looking up as expecting her to proceed.

"Stop!" said Kate; "only that it is wrong to give you the trouble to begin again—but that sounds so formal!"

"I think it does," replied William, dashing his pen rapidly through the words; and the abbreviation is so pretty too. "There, continued he; "Dear Fanny!—that sounds as well again!"

"Fanny!" exclaimed Kate, half laughing in the midst of her blushes. "Fanny, indeed! Why, cousin William!"—

And cousin William, awaking immediately to the perception of the true state of the case, dashed out the second beginning as rapidly as he had done the first, and laughing with a very good grace at his own stupidity, wrote this time, in full assurance of being right,—

"Dear Frank!"

"Fanny, forsooth!" repeated Kate, still laughing.

"Well but, Kate, remember that I had never heard of this friend of yours. To be sure it was very, very stupid. But now shall we go on with the letter? or may I ask who this Frank"—

"Fanny," interposed Kate, archly.

"Well! who this Francis is? Does my good aunt know, dear Kate? or"—

"Oh yes, dear William! Mother knows and father knows, and both like him so much! It has been kept a secret till now, because his friends are so much better to

do in the world than mine! for he is a tradesman, William, going into partnership with his late master; they are so much richer and grander than father, that we thought they might not like their eldest son to marry a poor working girl. But he said they would only look to good character, and so they say in this letter, and they have consented; and he told them how you, my own cousin, had got on by your own good conduct, William, and how proud he was of knowing you"—

"I know him, then!" interrupted William, with pleased curiosity.

"Yes, to be sure! Don't you remember our all drinking tea together at Farmer Wilmot's last Sunday was three weeks? Lucy knew it all along."

"Frank! Frank Willatts?" inquired William eagerly. "Was it for you, then, that Lucy wrote that letter?"

"To be sure she did. And were you

jealous of her, William? And was that why she went away? Oh, William, William! to be jealous of dear, good Lucy, because she kept my secret! Oh, cousin William!"

But William was too happy to be very penitent, and Kate was too pleased and too busy to dilate upon his offences. She had her letter to dictate, and, with a little help from her willing amanuensis, a very pretty letter it was; and so completely in charity with all the world, especially with the Franks of the world, was this amanuensis, that, before he had finished Kate's epistle, he had written himself into such feelings of good-will towards her correspondent as to add a most friendly and cousinly postscript on his own account.

What were the contents of the far more ardent and eloquent letter which William Marshall afterwards wrote, and whether he did or did not obtain his mistress's par-

don for his jealousy, and its fruits, we leave to the imagination of our fair readers. We, for our part, knowing the clemency of the sex, incline to think that he did.

THE SIGNAL.

"Mine honour is my life."—SHAKSPEARE

"BE waiting soon after dark, my dearest Leonora, at the balcony of your apartment, and when you see me holding up a torch in the little boat upon the lake, steal unobserved, if possible, from the castle, and come to meet me at the water-side. I must see you; must pour my sorrows into your sympathizing bosom; must take leave of you—possibly for ever!

"Your unhappy Brother,

"FERNANDO JUAN CARLOS DE GUZMAN."

For the twentieth time, Donna Leonora read her beloved brother's letter, as she stood leaning upon the beautifully carved stone work of the balcony, watching the appointed signal. Her husband was absent; and the mystery in the delivery of the billet had excited the attention of her serving maidens, Livia and Ursula, and had even awakened in their coarser minds, —accustomed to the not unfrequent flirtations of Spanish beauties,—suspicions that their grave and high-minded lady, hitherto so inaccessible and so spotless, was, at last, about to listen at least to one amongst her innumerable admirers. The disguise of the letter-bearer, and the silence and secrecy of his own approach, were, so far as Don Garcia was concerned, wholly unnecessary. But Donna Leonora, aware of the untamed—perhaps untameable—impetuosity of her brother's character (an only brother, and most fondly beloved),

and of his impatience of contradiction, and doubtful, also, how far what she had to hear might be connected with the political convulsions of these troubled times, and certain of her husband's just reliance upon her affection and prudence, resolved to obey implicitly Don Fernando's directions, to wait in the balcony until she perceived the signal-torch, and then to hasten to meet him by the edge of the lake.

As she stood leaning on the carved stonework, her guitar at her side, the beams of the full moon striking on her rich jewels and her commanding beauty, and illumining the splendid mansion, of which she was the undisputed mistress (from one of whose opened windows peeped forth the inquisitive and laughing serving maidens), the contrast—that contrast so frequent in this world of contradictions—between the splendour and gaiety of outward circum-

stances, and the cares and anxieties of the inner mind, the wide difference, in short, between appearance and reality, was most strikingly exemplified. To the eye she was bright, fair, sweet, and calm, as the flowers clustered in their sculptured vase, that waved above her head, diffusing beauty and fragrance around her; but, as the flower-leaf is subject to influences from without, shaken by the night wind, and battered by the rain, so is that sentient and delicate blossom, the human heart, liable to be swayed by the changeful gusts of passion and feeling; and, even when in itself equable and firm, it is but too often torn and shattered by sympathy with the sufferings and injuries of the objects of its best affections. And so it fared with the gentle Leonora at this moment, when, awakening from a long reverie, occupied in vain guesses as to the purport of the letter which lay by her side, she glanced sud-

denly down towards the lake, and saw the signal-torch gleaming high above the waters.

In a few minutes the brother and sister were standing together, in earnest conversation beneath a group of cedar, and cypress, and Portugal laurel, through whose dark foliage the moonbeams struck in bright fitful gleams, as the cool breeze of evening swayed the huge branches.

"He insulted me, Leonora, before the whole regiment: called me a rash, hot-headed boy; and when I sent the young Conde de Merida to him, to demand an apology, or to appoint the time and weapons for a meeting, he refused to listen to him or answer him, otherwise than by saying that his regard for my father's memory, his old comrade in arms, alone prevented him from putting me under arrest for sending a challenge to my superior officer; that for this time he forgave me,

but that I had need look to it, for that the next breach of discipline should be visited upon me with all the rigour of military law. And this from Manuel Hernandez to a descendant of the house of Guzman! And he survives, and I survive! And all redress is closed against me by military discipline, forsooth! Military discipline!! Well, I have removed that barrier, have thrown up my commission; and if, upon my return to Madrid, he refuse me the satisfaction that I require, I will leave Spain—leave Europe! The world does not want wages in which the son of an old Castilian, even if he abandon his estates, his rank, his country, may win for himself enough to maintain life, without forfeiting that without which life is worthless—honour."

"Alas! my dearest Fernando! my most dear brother!" exclaimed Donna Leonora, in the deepest affliction; "can you speak thus of leaving your country, of abandon-

ing the princely name and the princely home of our ancestors, of deserting now, in the moment when she most needs the defence of every loyal cavalier, the young and innocent sovereign, in the assertion of whose rights you took so vivid an interest; above all, can you think of forsaking me! True, I have a kind and an honourable husband; but even his affection would not suffice for my happiness, if you, the playmate of my childhood, the companion and friend of my maturer years, my dear brother, my only living relation, were to become a wanderer and an exile! Speak to my husband, Fernando; he, too, is a soldier, and a noble Castilian! Consult him. What was the commencement of this unlucky quarrel? Don Manuel Hernandez has a lovely daughter, the Donna Serafina, respecting whom he is known to be singularly tenacious. Surely, her name was not mentioned between ye?"

"His daughter, quotha!" replied the

fiery youth "I never saw her, have hardly heard that such a person existed! Don Diego Velasquez and myself were speaking of a stranger, clearly a lady of distinction, a beauty whom we had met together on the Prado, and whom I had subsequently seen, oftener indeed than I cared to tell him, at early mass at the church of the Holy Trinity. He dared to compare with this angel, pure, dignified, gracious, and graceful;—I have never spoken to her, but I am *sure* that she is all this; there is an evidence of bearing and of countenance, to say nothing of the careful attendance of two old domestics, whose appearance vouches for the station and the character of their mistress—he dared to compare with *her* a Jewish girl, picked up in some of the alleys of the city: and it was my indignation at this insult, offered to a virtuous lady, which provoked the interference of Colonel Hernandez, who had entered un-

observed during the dispute. Don Diego apologised. He is a slight boy; a trivial jester, who would crack jokes at his mother's death-bed, or his father's tomb: but Hernandez! And to refuse me all explanation! all redress! To disgrace me before my comrades, and then to stand upon his seniority! his military discipline! 'The day would come,' he said, 'when I should repent my violence.' Death will arrive before that day! Farewell, my Leonora! Women cannot comprehend these feelings! Schooled before all his officers! And he expects that I shall submit! that I shall rejoin the regiment, to be pardoned, it may be, or schooled again! By St. Jago, the gentleman is modest! Farewell, my precious sister! my own Leonora. May the Holy Virgin watch over you! Forget me, my best Leonora; I can never forget you." And he broke from her affectionate embrace, leaped into the boat that

awaited him, and rowed rapidly to the opposite shore; where Jose, his faithful domestic, attended with his horses.

The weather was singularly fine even for that delicious climate. The moon, nearly at full, reigned in the clear and deep-blue sky like a milder sun, throwing a silvery light upon the wild and beautiful scenery, the deep and richly wooded glens, threaded by mountain streams, and surmounted by the abrupt precipices and rugged steeps of the Sierra Guadarrama, into the defiles of which a few hours' riding had now brought them. Even the stormy passions of man were insensibly soothed by the peaceful sights and the harmonious sounds of nature, the calm sweetness of the night, the lulling sound of the wind amongst the willows, and distant fall of waters gushing from a rock, and the balmy odours of the cistuses, the wild thyme, and the thousand aromatic herbs that sprang

around him on every side. Unconsciously his anger was yielding to milder thoughts, as he wended his way, taking, at the guidance of Jose, or the will of his steed, the nearest but least-frequented road to Madrid; when, on emerging from a grove of cork-trees, and entering a straight and narrow valley where the rude cart-track wound between tall and almost inaccessible crags, celebrated as the resort of the banditti, formed in these times of civil war by the refuse of either army, he was startled from his meditations by the repeated sound of a pistol-shot, and the shrill screams of female voices; and saw right before him, in the moonlight, a carriage drawn by mules, with one or two unarmed attendants, who, overpowered by superiority of numbers, and the suddenness of the attack, were on the point of surrendering to half-a-dozen ferocious-looking savages, armed to the teeth, who were so intent on

their booty, that they did not perceive the new-comers.

"Carry off the trunks, Pablo! Take care of the lady, Joachim! She looks like one for whom we may demand good ransom," cried the ruffian, who seemed to be their leader.

The reply to this injunction was a shot from Fernando's pistol, which levelled the wretch to the earth. The faithful Jose seconded his master: the driver of the carriage and the attending servants, encouraged by the unexpected succour, rallied round their lady; and, in a few minutes the assailants, dismayed by the loss of their captain, and alarmed also by the sound of horses advancing along the highway, fled the field.

Don Fernando advanced to the trembling and frightened travellers (for there were two females ensconced in the caléche), whom he had rescued from worse than death.

"The beauty of the Prado!" cried he, in ecstacy; "the lovely devotee of the Holy Trinity!"

"Serafina, my beloved daughter!" exclaimed the newly-arrived cavalier, joining the group—"and you, senor, her protector, her preserver—how can we repay such services? Don Fernando! Is it indeed, Don Fernando de Guzman?"

"Colonel Hernandez!"—and, without their at all knowing how it happened, the two brave hands were joined in the most cordial grasp of affectionate amity.

"Well, is not this better now, than fighting for neither could tell what?" said Don Manuel, after a few minutes passed in the warmest expressions of gratitude on the part of the father and daughter. "You will understand, my good young friend, that I had heard enough of your conversation with Don Diego, to be convinced that you were speaking of Serafina, without exactly

knowing the degree or the manner of your acquaintance with her. This occasioned my taking up the matter with undue warmth. Upon discovering, however, how matters stood, I was actually on my road to your excellent sister, Donna Leonora, to commission her to mediate between us; and, as you confess to having left her in some trouble, why, I think, with your permission, we had better proceed thither now. She will forgive our untimely visit for the sake of its object."

There is little need to say with how much delight Don Fernando acceded to this proposition; or how much more delicious the silver light of the moon, the lulling sound of wind and waters, and the balmy scent of the shrubs, which hung heavy with the night dew from the romantic defiles of the Sierra Guadarrama, seemed to the lover, when traversed at the side of his beloved.

It was long past midnight when they arrived at the castle, to the unspeakable pleasure of its fair mistress, and a little to the disappointment of her waiting maids, who found, to their no small amazement, that the cavalier of the signal-torch was no other than their lady's own brother.

SIR ALLAN AND HIS DOG.

"Therefore *his* age *was* as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly."

SHAKSPEARE.

"No, Oscar! no; your young master is deer-stalking to-day. Don't you hear the gun, which has startled Jessy so wofully? He does not want you just now, Oscar. His view, before firing that startling gun, which, wo is me! will have more than frightened the poor, pretty

deer; for Allan is such a shot, that he seldom misses his aim,—his view, before he frightened Jessy, and awakened the echoes and brought down the red deer with that sudden shot, was to creep towards them quietly and stealthily. He does not want the good hound, Oscar, today! Oscar must stay with his mistress." And as the lovely Agnes Macdonald spoke coaxingly these coaxing words, her small, fair hand thrown around Oscar's neck, as he stood beside her, the noble animal looked up in her face with his bright, intelligent eyes, delighting in the sweetness of the voice, comprehending, or seeming to comprehend, the meaning of the words, and acquiescing most contentedly in her decision. There was, certainly, no great hardship in standing at the side of Agnes Macdonald, the beautiful and the kind; and with looks that spoke, as plainly as looks could speak, his affection

and his gratitude, her honest and faithful favourite (somewhat of the largest and roughest for a lady's pet), lay down in calm and quiet happiness at her feet.

Her fair companion, the high-born and graceful Jessy Stewart, who, startled, as Agnes had truly said, at the sudden sound of Allan Macdonald's gun, had been standing in some dismay behind her friend, now that the shock was passed, advanced smilingly, and found a seat upon the bank beside her.

"How fond you are, Agnes, of that huge dog! What would the exquisites who hovered round you in London and in Paris say, if they saw you in full dress too, not as I am, snooded and plaided like a Highland lassie, with your jewelled hand resting upon that shaggy head, and his long, rough body reclined upon the satin skirt! What would they say to

that, 'my dainty leddie,' as old Annot is wont to call you?"

"And what matters what they say or think, Jessy?" responded the warm-hearted maiden, kindling into a dignity of youthful beauty and unconscious stateliness, pure, delicate, and graceful as the attitude of a swan upon mountain or lake, or the station of a doe amongst her native glens.

"What care I for the exquisites of Paris or of London? Not half as much as for the mountain posy which you have been collecting—the harebell, and the heather-sprig, and our own elegant and abundant Scottish rose. What is the worth of a 'wilderness of' *such* 'monkeys,' compared to that of our noble, faithful Oscar? What would be the amount of their services in a whole century, measured with those which he has rendered to us? Why, did you never hear," continued Agnes, ob-

serving the surprised look with which her friend regarded her evident excitement; "did you never hear of poor Oscar's exploits in the hard winter, five years back? No; you were in Germany at the time: and it was before Allan's attachment and your return of affection (nay, Jessy, a princess would have no cause to blush for loving such a man as my brother); it was before this affiance, so gratifying to us all, had given you a daughter's interest in the affairs of our house. If you are not afraid of a long story, I will tell you why it is that, from the oldest to the youngest, we all consider Oscar, not merely as a noble animal, but a benefactor and a friend.

"You know the pride and delight of our family, my little sister, Jean; but you did not know the beloved and venerable relative, my dear and excellent grandfather, of whom she was, from the moment she could totter across the room, climb into his lap, and hang prattling round his

neck, the prime pet and favourite. He doted upon the sturdy, hardy, merry little girl, with her joyous smile, and her joyous temper, so fearless, open, frank, and kind; and she, in her turn, idolized the fine, cheerful, benevolent old man, her most alert playmate and most indulgent friend! Oh! how they loved each other! And what a picture it was to see them together! He, at nearly eighty, still upright, robust, and vigorous in form, with a regular, oval countenance, high, noble features, hazel eyes, bright and keen as a falcon's, a mouth of feminine sweetness, a fine open forehead, a magnificent bald head, and long curling hair, as white as the snow on Ben Nevis, contrasting with his clear, ruddy complexion, the very hue of a ripe peach. Oh, what a sight it was to see that beautiful old man, so full of health, and life, and glee, and kindliness, tossing about that rosy, laughing child with the activity of youth! never weary of

humouring her pretty fancies, and going even beyond her in innocent mirth, and fun, and frolic. How Jeanie loved him! How we all loved him, the dear and venerable man! so generous and frank, so open-hearted and guileless himself, so unsuspicious of guile in others; so full of honourable thoughts and disinterested and affectionate feelings! how proud we all were of a relative, whose cheerful and venerable age accorded so well with his virtuous and active youth!

The Southrons, estimating little except the conventional benefits of wealth or station, are apt to sneer at our pride of ancestry; and perhaps we may a little overvalue that mere string of names, that long roll of parchment, a pedigree; but a progenitor like Sir Allan Macdonald, or, as he preferred to be called, Kilburnie,—a living example for all that is true, and just, and honourable, and kind, cannot be

too highly appreciated. His family, his clansmen, his very countrymen, were proud of the good old man, whose sweet and genial temperament diffused gaiety and happiness around him. He was a blessing to the whole country. You will be a happy woman, Jessy, if my dear brother, the heir of his estates and his name, should (as Heaven grant he may) fulfil the promise of his youth, and inherit also the frank and winning virtues to which his grandfather owed his extensive and remarkable popularity.

"Sir Allan being a widower, and my mother a widow, she and her three children, Allan, Jeanie, and myself, lived with him at Kilburnie; Jeanie, younger than either of us by ten years, and a posthumous child, being, as I have said, his playmate and companion; whilst Oscar, then in his prime, whom my grandfather, still a keen sportsman, valued above all

greyhounds for his speed (if my venerable kinsman, in his universal candour and charity, had a prejudice, it was against the sleek, high-bred, fine-limbed dogs, which form the pride of the southern courser, and Oscar had won a cup from a round dozen of competitors from Newmarket, brought on purpose to oppose him), and whom Jeanie delighted in for his gamesomeness, was the constant attendant of their long rambles.

"In spring, summer, autumn, and winter, in every season, and in all weathers, would the active old man sally forth with the hardy little girl, sometimes holding him by the hand, or when weary, carried in his arms, and the good hound, Oscar, bounding on before them. He had an innocent pride in dropping in with Jeanie in his hand at houses at a considerable distance, particularly at the residences of his daughters and grandchildren (for his

daughters, older than my father, an only son, and early married, had scattered his descendants over the country), and replying, with a chuckling glee, when questioned about horses and servants, 'that he had walked; that he left such effeminacies as coaches and flunkies to those who needed them, and was ready to dance a reel with the youngest lassie present; and it should go hard but he would tire her down: and Jeanie hersel' will keep it up with any lad of her inches; won't you, Jeanie?' and the vaunt would end by the good old man tossing Jeanie upon his shoulder, and cutting the Highland fling to his own music.

This was his delight: a ball was nothing without his presence. If you had but seen the nod and the wink, the fulness of his glee, the overflow of his good-humour, his archness in suspecting, and sagacity in detecting which lad and

lassie would like to come together for the dance; ay, and sometimes for longer than the dance! How he would reconcile old feuds, and cement new friendships; ay, and how he would use the influence of age, and character, and property, even to the very stretch of his interest, to smooth difficulties, and turn dim and distant wishes into present realities! Many a hopeful youth has owed his prosperity, many a gentle maiden her happiness, to the unwearied benevolence of the kind and merry Sir Allan.

"One Christmas he went to Glenmore, accompanied, as usual, by Jeanie and Oscar, to keep the birthday of his favourite daughter, Lady Macleod. My brother was detained at home by a slight indisposition; and the weather was so severe, that my mother, always delicate, was afraid to venture, I myself being too young to be regularly introduced, and too tall to

pass for a child. Sir Allan had fixed to return on New Year's Eve, the succeeding day being always one of high festivity at Kilburnie, the servants and neighbours dining in the great hall, and the whole castle being alive with festivity and jollity.

It was an occasion on which we felt that he would be very unwilling to absent himself, and yet the day fixed for his return was so tremendous, that we took for granted Lady Macleod would detain her honoured guest at Glenmore. Snow had fallen during the whole of the preceding night, accompanied by a drifting wind, so that to send carriages and horses was impracticable, every vestige of the road, a wild mountain-track, at the best, was impassable, or my brother would have gone under the pretence of fetching Jeanie; for we all knew well, that the only shade that ever crossed the brightness of our dear

grandfather's countenance, was occasioned by his suspicion of being taken care of,—an affront which the hardy sportsman would have regarded with as much jealousy and displeasure as would be evinced by a veteran of the wars at any precaution that should imply a doubt of his personal prowess.

This consideration alone deterred my brother from setting forth to Glenmore in person; and as the day grew wilder and wilder, all around, hill, plain, and valley, covered with a sheet of fragile, glittering white, with scarcely an hour's intermission of incessant snowfall, and the night closed in with bitter gusts of wind, which blew the frozen and feathery particles against the face with blinding violence; even my mother, a nervous and timorous woman, with a revered parent and a beloved child at stake, made up her mind to believe that, as it was evidently impossible that

the expected guests would reach Kilburnie Castle on the morrow, its master would be content to remain where he was. Weather less formidable, so that it might have afforded some chance of his finding the road, or some probability of the arrival of his guests the next day, would have been more alarming. To have stirred out in such a fall as this seemed impossible. So we went to bed in comfort.

"About an hour after midnight we were awakened by a tremendous noise at the gate of the castle, a mixture of scratching and howling. Upon opening the door, it was found to be our friend, Oscar, who, instantly singling out my brother, leaped upon him with a piteous cry, and then went on a little way beyond the gate, returning to see if Allan followed him (who delayed a few minutes to furnish himself with a lantern, and men with hurdles, mattrasses, and ropes), pulling him by the

coat-skirts with the most urgent whine, wagging his tail when he began to move, and enticing him forward by every means in his power. Oh, I shall never forget the poor dog's piteous ways, his trembling earnestness, his eager looks, and the expression of his anxious cry—no human voice could have conveyed his meaning more distinctly. Never shall I forget that moment, nor the hour of agonizing suspense that followed."

"They were saved?" inquired Jessy, anxiously, breaking silence for the first time.

"Oscar led his party to a hollow by the hill-side, about three miles distant; and there the venerable old man was found leaning against the rock in a half-recumbent posture, so as to shelter the child, who was clasped to his bosom. The snow was gathering around them. Sleep had crept upon both, and, in another hour, all help would have been unavailing."

"But they *were* saved?" again inquired Jessy.

"Thanks to Oscar's fidelity and intelligence, they were. By proper care, they both recovered sufficiently to dance at the proposed festival on Old New Year's Day. Our dear grandfather lived in health and happiness until last year, just before we had the happiness of renewing our friendship with your family; and Jeanie is, you know, as lively and as lifelike a little personage as treads this most excellent earth. And now, my dearest Jessy, do you wonder that Oscar—look at him, poor fellow, he knows that we are talking of him!—Do you wonder that this noble and sagacious animal should be my pet?"

THE CARTEL.

"Gaoler, look to him;—tell not me of mercy."

SHAKESPEARE.

"FLEE, I beseech thee, Isidore! If the peace and comfort—(why do I name such words)—if the very existence of thy poor wife be dear to thee—I implore thee flee! By the memory of our young loves, by the happy days we have known together—by that closer and dearer tie, the sorrows that we have shared—by the precious

boy at whose couch we watched in vain—by the smiling girl who now lies lapped in the unconscious sleep of infancy—by the dead for whom we mourned—and by that living blessing whom God in His mercy sent to compensate that mighty woe—by a father's hopes and a father's duties I conjure thee, flee! See, I am tall—the cloak hangs nearly as low over thy ancles as over mine, thou need'st but droop a little thy manly form as if in grief—oh! what wife could walk erect from the prison of her husband!—thou hast but to draw the capote over thy brow, and to let fall the veil, and hold thy handkerchief to thy eyes—alas! did I ever leave thee other than weeping?—and thou wilt pass undiscovered. Or suffer me to arrange this hair, and thou mayest defy detection. Dost thou not remember how often in our wooing days we have passed for brother and sister?

How often thou thyself hast vowed, when thy comrades have been vaunting the delicate bloom of their blue-eyed maidens, that thou didst rather prize the swart skin and jetty eye of the rich South than the dainty red and white of their rose-lipped beauties. Alas! it was the love in that eye that won thy heart. And canst thou now resist its appeal, now that love and life hang upon thy consent? Flee, my Isidore! if thy wife, if thy child be dear to thee, wrap thee in this disguise and flee!"

"And leave thee here to perish!"

"Nay, my husband, nay! not to perish, but to join thee speedily in some distant land, and live a calm and blissful life in safety and in freedom. Wrap thyself in this cloak, and away. Away then, I conjure thee! The patrole will soon go their rounds, and the sentinel who is now on duty will be changed. Nay, I have

not taken him into our counsel. Look not reproachfully. But well I know that André Duval will show nought but respect and sympathy when he sees me, or one whom he takes for me, pass in sorrow from the place. Dally no longer. Lisette waits without to conduct thee to her mother's abode, one of the old niches about Notre Dame, where thou mightest be safe for ages. There thou shalt stay until the search be passed, and then we will depart for America. Nay, wherefore shake thy head? I shall be safe and free. Be sure of that. The Imperial Josephine, although even she may not venture to intercede for one who has so transgressed the hard iron martial law as to challenge his superior officer, will yet full surely protect her favoured hand-maiden—one whose wedding she was graciously pleased to honour with her presence,—from the effects of her wifely love. Alas, was I

not the wretched cause of this calamity? Is it not through thy love for me that thou art still in prison? and wilt thou deny me the blessed privilege of setting thee free?"

And no longer able to resist her persuasions, Colonel de Gourbillon did submit to array himself in Adèle's garments, and, having safely passed the sentinel on guard, was in a few minutes following the steps of Mademoiselle Lisette from the prison of La Force to the precincts of Notre Dame.

The escape was complete and successful: but an unexpected circumstance rendered poor Adèle's stratagem unavailing, and replaced Isidore once again in his dungeon, and in all the peril attendant upon a breach of military law under the iron rule of Napoleon.

* * * * * *

It was a right queenly chamber tha

boudoir, into which the soft air of an April morning stole so wooingly; and yet its pervading beauty spoke rather of elegance than of splendour. The prevailing taste of its fair and gentle mistress was everywhere visible. Flowers, pictured to the life by the deft needle of the embroideress, bordered the pale pink hangings, which shed a tender blush over the apartment; flowers, bright from the loom of Arras, seemed strewn in gay confusion over the rich but delicate carpet; flowers, fresh from the dewy gardens, glowed in the flower-painted jars of Sèvres porcelain, which crowded the marble tables, whilst plants, the fairest and choicest of the hot-house and conservatory, were grouped in alabaster vases, catching the soft light of the veiled windows.

On a Grecian couch, near a half-curtained recess, sat a gracious and graceful lady, the fitting inmate of this scene of

enchantment. Her dress, even to the lilies in her bosom and the Provence rose in her hand, was of pure and spotless white, the most exquisite in texture and most becoming in form. Her shape and features were faultless in contour and expression. If the bloom of youth were faded, it was more than replaced by sweetness and sensibility. At the moment of which we write, that lovely countenance wore the gentlest look of pity as she addressed a sad and weeping lady, who had just been admitted to her presence:—

"Ma pauvre Adèle! I had hoped and believed that you were still the joyful occupant of your husband's prison. I never thought to be so sorry to see you at St. Cloud. Colonel de Gourbillon is then retaken?"

"Not retaken, may it please your Majesty: he accomplished his escape in safety, and reached a retreat where he

might have remained undiscovered until the day of doom; but the sentinel who watched the door of his cell on the evening of his departure was to be held responsible for his prisoner. Had not Isidore surrendered himself, that poor soldier must have now been the victim; and dearly as I love my husband, or rather, because I do love him dearly, I could not have wished him so saved. He is again in prison, and the sentinel free."

"Was that sentinel an accomplice in the escape?"

"No, on my word of honour, gracious Madam. He was my foster brother, the son of my good old nurse, and would not, as we well knew, raise the veil, or pull away the handkerchief from, as he supposed, a weeping wife, as a rougher warder might have done; but we took more than common pains to preserve him from all suspicion of our plans, for his sake and

our own. Poor André! he at least will escape!"

"And after all, what was the cause of this unhappy challenge?"

"Alas! alas! royal Madam, I was the thrice unhappy and most unconscious cause! Walking on the Boulevard Italien with Madame le Vasseur, General Villaret, heated, as he says, by wine, and mistaking me for my cousin, Pauline de St. Brie (your Imperial Majesty has often noticed our sister-like resemblance), to whom, as it now appears, he has been for some months secretly married, accosted me in a manner which occasioned me the most lively alarm. My husband came up at the moment; the General, certainly not himself, and hardly aware of his mistake, treated the matter with provoking levity. Madame le Vasseur's presence and my tears, put, for the time, an effectual check on Isidore. He hurried us home, and then

wrote that unhappy letter,—that challenge to a superior officer,—which falling, I hardly know how, into the hands of the minister at war, constitutes the sole and fatal proof of his breach of martial law; for General Villaret, as much distressed as man can be, and full of self-blame and self-accusation, denies all recollection, except of his own misconduct. O! if that fatal letter could be regained or destroyed! or if the real facts of the case could be brought under the notice of him in whose word will lie the final sentence,—the awful doom of life or death. O! if he could know the provocation, the palliation! he, that soul of honour, who holds his Imperial Consort's purity as the brightest jewel of his crown. How often have we heard him quote Cæsar's axiom—?"

Here a slight movement of caution, and perhaps of uneasiness on the part of Josephine, and a noise like the rustling of

papers, suddenly stopped Adèle's pleadings, and directed her attention to the half curtained recess. It opened on a small turret chamber, fitted up as a private study, and at a writing table, folding a letter, sat a gentleman, plainly dressed in a single-breasted green coat, a white kerseymere waistcoat, and the ribbon of the legion of honour at his button-hole. His little cocked hat was on a chair at his side; and although his noble head was bent over the letter which he was folding, Adèle felt, at once, that it was no other than Napoleon. Papers were strewed before him, and amongst these the eyes of the trembling wife rested upon her husband's well-known writing, the challenge upon which his fate and hers depended.

The Emperor paused in his occupation, and applied to his snuff-box for his habitual luxury; his countenance was calm and untroubled, and, but for a momentary

glance towards the curtained doorway, it might have been doubted if he were conscious that he was not alone.

"Speak!" whispered Josephine, encouragingly. "Plead your husband's cause!"

Five minutes before, Madame de Gourbillon would have given her right hand for such an opportunity. Now it had arrived, and between reverential awe of her great master and the tremendous interest which she had at stake, she knelt before him, weak and wordless as a child.

"Pardon, Sire! pardon!" Her voice died away, and had not a passion of tears come to relieve her she would have fainted.

Napoleon made no answer. He was about to seal the letter which he had folded, and selecting a paper from the table, he first used it to light the wax taper which stood in a richly-chased golden candlestick by his side, and then flung it

into the brazier, tapping his snuff-box as he watched the burning fragments, and glancing upon the happy wife, and her sympathizing mistress, with a smile exquisite in its sweetness and beauty. Perhaps at that moment his sensations were the most enviable of the three.

Need I say that the paper which he had destroyed was the only proof of Isidore's guilt—the all-important cartel?

THE RETURN FROM THE FAIR.

"For love thou know'st is full of jealousy."
SHAKSPEARE.

It was on a bright balmy evening towards the end of July, that half the population of this sunny side of Berkshire were pouring through the suburbs of Belford Regis, on their return from the annual festival, popularly called the Cherry Fair, because it forms the great mart for the waggon-loads of that luscious fruit, which

blacken the orchards, skirt the beech woods, and dot the commons, of that wild and beautiful tract of country which runs along the northern banks of the Thames. Carriages of every variety, from the lordly landau (our story bears date some five and forty years back), with its four prancing steeds and its liveried outriders, to the humble caravan crowded with women and children, already fretful from the fatigue which, in lower as in higher life, treads so close upon the heels of pleasure; all sorts of wheeled vehicles—chariots, phaetons, curricles, gigs, and carts; horsemen of every rank, and foot-people of all ages and denomination; some tipsy, some sober, some merry, some sad, all came pouring from the fair; and the stir and movement of the different groups, the sound of so many passengers, talking, laughing, hallooing, and whooping, mingled with the distant noises of the scene of action, where

the ringing of bells, the beating of drums, the lowing of cattle, and the blowing of trumpets, contended with, and at times nearly overpowered, the mingled hum of the multitude, formed a scene, which, lighted by the bright beams of a midsummer sun, and fanned by the pleasant evening breeze, had something peculiarly exhilarating in its aspect and character.

Standing upon the hill which parts Belford Regis from Aberleigh, and looking towards the old town, its towers and steeples glittering in the sunshine, its venerable buildings mingled with groves and gardens, and crowned with terraces of a lighter and gayer style of architecture, the clear waters of the Kennet spanned by noble bridges and crowded with barges and pleasure vessels, whilst river, bridges, streets, and quays, were all alive with the gay and stirring population, rolling its apparently inexhaustible tides upward from the good

town, and then onward through broad avenues and tufted lanes, into the neighbouring country beyond; looking from the point, it was scarcely possible for the coldest observer not to be gratified by a spectacle so full of innocent, although somewhat boisterous, gaiety, and wide-spreading enjoyment.

Among the most gratified of these spectators was a somewhat stern-looking dame, who sat in her own porch before a small farm-house, just without the suburbs of Belford Regis, and took off her spectacles, and laid aside her knitting, to survey her pretty grand-daughter Susan, who, followed by two fine boys, her brothers, one beating most lustily a child's drum, the other shouldering with great pride and valour a toy musket, approached slowly from the fair.

Susan Wharton was one of the prettiest lasses of the country side, and her sweet-

ness and modesty equalled her beauty. She and her brothers were orphans, but had been carefully brought up by her father's mother, the venerable matron of the knitting-needle and the spectacles, who, having a small but excellent pasture-farm close to the town, and being an active, stirring, bustling dame, accomplished in all the arts of the dairy, contrived to make a good living for herself and her grandchildren by supplying the inhabitants with cream, milk, butter, and other pastoral luxuries. Lone woman though she were, the world had gone well with her, and she had scarcely known a care since the sudden and almost simultaneous death of her son and her son's wife, except indeed the dread occasioned by the perversity and headstrong temper of Robert Goring, her pretty grand-daughter's favoured suitor, who, whenever a fit of jealousy came across him, which was far oftener than

ought to have occurred, considering the reserve and prudence of his fair mistress, (but when did jealousy listen to reason!) was sure to avenge himself by threatening to turn soldier; a threat of all others most grievous to Dame Wharton's ears, whose eldest grandson, having enlisted during his father's life, had thereby occasioned to his affectionate relatives a species of trouble and anxiety unknown in the traditions of that peaceful family since the time of a certain Rupert Wharton, some great-great-great-grandfather of poor James, who had followed the fortunes of his illustrious namesake, and fallen in the king's service during the civil wars.

Jem's delinquency, and the threat to follow his example so frequently held out by Robert Goring, had so strongly impressed Dame Wharton's imagination, that her natural pride and pleasure at the sight of her blooming grandchildren was some-

what lessened by the martial array in which the two boys presented themselves.

"I suppose it 's some foolish present of Robert Goring's," said the good dame to her faithful adherent, Jenny Stubbs, a short damsel, who assisted in the care of the cows, as well as in carrying milk and butter about the town, and had been left to attend her mistress during the absence of her grandchildren; "It 's certainly some folly of Robert's, for I am sure that Susan would never have given the boys such nonsensical toys, fit only to put war, and soldiering, and such nonsensical notions into their heads, poor children! But where is Robin?" added she, as Susan approached; "and what ring is that upon your finger? You have not gone to church without leave or licence, to be sure, Susan, now that all 's arranged for your being married at Christmas, when Robert is settled in his own little farm? I wonder

what his uncle, Master Goring, the cooper, who has been as good as a father to him, would say to that. Speak, child, can't you? Are you married?—yes or no? or has Robert bought the ring beforehand, and got you to put it on in this way to make a fool of your old grandmother?"

"No, indeed," returned Susan! "I would not have done anything so disrespectful to you, grandmother, for twenty Robins. This is no wedding-ring."

"No?" said her grandmother, assuming her spectacles to take a second view of the slender finger and the glittering gem which encircled it; and comparing both with her own hard, ruddy hand, "No!" exclaimed she, eyeing it more intently, "this gimcrack isn't such a ring as I was married with. But why dost wear it upon thy wedding-finger, child? and who gave it to thee? Eh? Robin? Ah! he's a foolish boy to throw away so much money. I warrant

it cost a good half-guinea. And the boys and their nonsense! Ah! those young heads! I warrant he's been finely cheated! Robert bought it in the fair?"

"No indeed, grandmother!" responded Susan.

"Not Robert! Who then?" inquired Dame Wharton, with great sternness. "How dare you accept a present from any one else? Ah, child! child! she that takes rings from fresh acquaintance little deserves that an honest man should seek to put one upon her wedding-finger. Who gave it to you, hussy? speak, I say! Who gave you the ring?"

"I must not tell you his name, dear grandmother," began Susan, with great agitation; "I have promised not to tell! You wrong me, grandmother! indeed you do!" sobbed the weeping beauty. "It was no fresh acquaintance! Indeed, indeed it was not! but I cannot tell his

name. I have promised not to tell any one, not even Robert or you!"

"Athk me," interrupted the young gentleman with the musket, interposing between his angry grandmother and his frightened sister, with an alacrity and boldness of bearing, which together with his readiness and shrewdness of speech contrasted laughably with an infantine lisp, from which Ned, his younger brother, (he of the drum,) was perfectly free.

"Athk me, gwandmother, and don't thcold poor thither Thuthan! Athk me; I know the whole thtowy," pursued Master Willy, shifting his weapon most energetically with both hands from shoulder to shoulder.

"Brother Jem, the soger 's come to Belford!" bawled Ned, shouting at the top of his voice to overcome the noise of his own drum.

"Yeth," resumed Willy, "when bwo-

ther Dzem put the wing on thithter Thuthanth finger he pwomethed to make me a dwummer, a weal dwummer, not a tham, like Ned, but a weal dwummer" ——

"And me a fifer!" shouted Ned, still accompanying himself with his noisy instrument.

"Ath thoon ath ever I wath ath tall ath the muthket; pwovided," resumed this discreet keeper of secrets, "pwovided we never thaid a thyllable of hith being at the fair! A weal dwummer! think of that!"

"And a real fifer!"

"Dwummer and fifer, fifer and dwummer," shouted the boys in chorus! "And bwother Dzem can make me a dwummer," added Master Willy, in a confidential whisper addressed to his grandmother, "for he 'th a therdzeant and wearth a thwath!— a therdzeant with a thilk thwath!"

"Not silk," interposed Ned; "worsted."

"Thilk, I thay" rejoined Willy.

And the one beating a grand tattoo, and the other shouldering arms, off the two boys marched, each shouting at the top of his childish voice, "Thilk!" "Worsted!" "Worsted!" "Thilk," until the sound was lost in the distance.

"Jem a serjeant! and at Belford! But why not come here, Susan? and why desire you to keep his being there a secret? I don't see any wisdom in such secrets," said the good dame, shaking her head. "And poor Robin, what 'll he say, I wonder? And why does Jem desire you to wear this foolish ring? It 's enough to make the lad enlist in good earnest."

"Why, dear grandmother, that's the very thing that Jem wants; not that he should enlist in reality, grandmother; nor that he should go for a soldier; but to cure him of these threats and jealousies. Somebody told James, who came to Bel-

ford this morning recruiting, how foolish Robin had been about Harry Goddard and George Elton, and everybody who spoke to me or looked at me, whether I spoke to them or not. So when I met him, and—oh dear, grandmother, what a fine stately man he is grown!—and when he found me out (for he hardly knew me at first), and had kissed me and hugged the boys—how pleased he was with Willy—he insisted on my taking this ring, which he received from some great lady to whom he had done a service abroad, and brought it here that it might be sold and serve for my marriage-portion: he insisted on my wearing it on my wedding-finger, and not satisfying Robin's curiosity farther than by telling him solemnly that no lover gave it to me; so that either he might put such a trust in my word and my truth as a husband ought to put—or, if that were

too good to happen, that he might enlist in James's own party, and so be let off to-morrow after having a good fright. I was not willing to play poor Robin such a trick; for you know, dear grandmother, there was little chance if he saw the ring but he would fly off; only James insisted on the misery of a jealous husband—and so—".

"And so Robert did see the ring, and did fly off? I thought something was amiss when you came home without him," said the grandmother.

"Yes!" sighed Susan, "he did see the ring, poor fellow! as soon as ever he rejoined me: he had been to help his aunt and cousins into their cart when I met James; he did see the ring, and asked me over and over again how I came by it, and who gave it to me. Willy and Ned were gone with James to see Punch and the wild beasts, or else—but I had pro-

mised James not to tell. And, thank Heaven, Robert said nothing of enlisting this time. So that I hope all will go right."

"Heaven send it may!" said her careful grandame; "but I love no secrets, and playing at enlisting is playing with edge-tools. Hearken, Susy! if Robert should come here to-night, send him to me. I must go see after the skimming!" and with a nod as eloquent as Lord Burleigh's, the good dame repaired to her dairy.

Susan, although somewhat comforted by Dame Wharton's last speech, could not quite get rid of certain apprehensions that clung about her. She hummed unconsciously her grandmother's favourite ditty—

> "I hate yon drum's discordant sound,
> Parading round, and round, and round"—

whenever the distant noise of the recruit-

ing party reached her from the town, or the din of poor Ned's new toy echoed through the mansion; and over and over again did she lament the attractions of Punch, and of the lions, elephants, and monkeys which had detained Willy from her side at a moment when his genius for explanations would have been invaluable to her unhappy lover; for accustomed to love Robert, faults and all, and almost persuaded to consider his rash and violent, but often repented and easily appeased jealousy, as a proof of the strength of his passion, the soft-hearted beauty was more alive to the danger of losing her betrothed than to the peril in which this solitary failing might place her future happiness. She even contemplated the possibility of sending Willy in quest of her luckless swain; but again the great show of wild beasts stood in her way. It had so happened that poor

Robin himself, always generous, especially to the boys whom their sister loved so dearly, had presented them the Christmas before with a Dutch toy called a Noah's Ark, consisting of a curiously fashioned compound of boat and house, filled not merely with the quaintly habited wooden figures representing the Patriarch's family, attired with an amplitude of apparel and a splendour of colouring which did honour to the Hollander's fancy, but with a variety of pairs of animals decked in hues almost as splendid and quite as unlike nature as those with which the Dutch artist had bedecked our antediluvian progenitors. Over this toy, preserved for them with great care by the grandmother, the young students in natural history were quietly seated, so deeply engaged in comparing those beasts which they had seen in the morning with their wooden prototypes in the

Ark (where, by the way, they were most inartificially stowed one above the other, the receptacle being scarcely capable of containing them when shoved in *en masse*, whence divers accidents to leg and tail, head and horn), that nothing short of a proposal to revisit Signor Polito's menagerie could have stirred them.

> "I hate yon drum's discordant sound,
> Parading round, and round, and round,"

half sung, half sighed, poor Susan.

> "I hate yon dwom'th dithcordant thound,
> Pawading wound, and wound, and wound,"

gaily echoed Master Willy.

"No, Ned," added the young gentleman, snatching from his little brother's hand a mutilated nondescript, minus three legs, one tail, and half a head, and prof-

fering in its place another monster cut asunder in the middle like Baron Munchausen's horse, and presenting a formidable horned head and two fore legs, sans the body and hind quarters usually found in quadrupeds of all descriptions.

"That'th a mithtake. Thith ith the other theep."

"That!" rejoined Ned, "that's as red as Cherry's calf. It's a lion."

"A lion!" repeated Willy contemptuously; "a lion with hornth! Look at the wam'th hornth! Thithter Thuthan, look! It'th a wam. Thee the hornth. Gwandmother callth Dzonth the thaddler ath cwooked ath a wam'th horn. It 'th a wam! Look, thithter Thuthan! thome theep are black, and thome may be wed. Ith'nt it a wam, Thuthan? Ithn't Ned wong?'

Susan suggested that, so far as could be judged from the relics of the animal, both were probably mistaken, those inte-

resting remains bearing most resemblance to a cow—an undignified solution of the enigma which united both disputants against their fair referee; and Dame Wharton returning from the dairy, and summoning the boys to supper and to bed, Susan reluctantly abandoned all hope, for that evening at least, of undeceiving her devoted but irascible lover.

Before dawn the next morning the young damsel, who slept in a small chamber of which the casement overhung the garden, heard a low tap at her window, accompanied by the peculiar bird-like whistle which had so often summoned the rustic Juliet, late and early, to the brief delight of a stolen dialogue with her enamoured Romeo.

Wrapping a large cloak about her, Susan stood leaning her hand against the open window.

"Robin! dear Robin!"

Robert could not see the rosy lips which spoke these few and simple words, but the tone, sweet, gentle, caressing, affectionate, implied all that could be imagined of truth and tenderness. It was a tone as sweet and open as her own sweet smile. He mustered all his indignation to resist the charm, and succeeded.

"I come here, Susan," said Robert, in low, resolute accents, "to ask you, for the last time, from whom, and for what purpose, you received the ring which I saw you wear yesterday. By Heaven, I see it now glittering in the moonlight. Answer this question, or we part for ever."

"It is a question, Robin, which I have promised not to answer at present. I can only tell you that I received it from no one who can interfere with our attachment. More I must not, cannot, tell!"

"Must not! cannot! say will not!" rejoined Robert, in a voice of deep and

concentrated anger. "Say will not, Susan! Once again, and for the last time, I ask you this plain question,—From whom did you receive this gewgaw? Answer! or may my right hand be struck off before I place the wedding-ring on your finger!"

"Oh, dearest Robin! grant me but a few short hours. Believe my word, dear Robert. Confide in my affection, in my faith!" exclaimed the poor girl, as her lover turned furiously away; "or ask my grandmother," added she; or inquire of Willy; they are bound by no promise," continued she, not regarding in her anxiety how much she was infringing her own. But if she did break her word it was to little purpose; the jealous lover fled from the garden unhearing or unheeding; and although no threat of enlisting had been spoken, nō farewell had been breathed, she remained persuaded that he had taken his measures, and with something

very like a presentiment that her brother's hasty plan would, as deception, however well intended, often does, lead to evil rather than to good. And so it proved.

Before noon on the next day James Wharton learnt that Robert Goring had enlisted the night before, not with his party, but with one belonging to another regiment stationed in Belford for the occasion of the fair; that, immediately upon ascertaining that Susan still refused to answer his question, he had repaired to *his* Sergeant Kite to announce his continued desire to enter the service; that as soon as admittance could be obtained, he had been examined and attested before the mayor and other magistrates; and that he and the recruiting party were by that time some miles on their way to the dépôt of the regiment. It was in the very heat of the Peninsular War; men were scarce, especially men so tall and finely formed,

so spirited and so active as poor Robert. It was impossible to procure his release, and James and his sister were left to bewail the ill consequences of his unlucky experiment, and Dame Wharton to lament, again and again, the evil destiny which led her descendants, and those connected with them, to go, as she phrased it, a *sogering*. The only comfort she derived upon the occasion (next, perhaps, to that general scolding of the guilty and the innocent, the efficacy of which as a consolation under affliction is well known to most ancient dames well to do in the world, who wear spectacles, knit stockings, and love their own way), her prime comfort consisted in cutting Ned's drum to pieces, to the great improvement of the tranquillity of the rustic homestead, and in throwing Willy's musket into the fire.

* * * * * *

Years passed away. The poor 'boys

grown into fine stout lads, tended the cows and carried the milk through the streets of Belford Regis; exhibiting no more dangerous warlike propensities than an inordinate ambition on the part of Willy to possess a gun for the purpose of shooting sparrows. Nothing had been heard of Robert; and James Wharton, now serjeant-major of his regiment, remained at a distance, sharing the perils and the victories of the British army. Still, however, Dame Wharton, all peaceful as were her inclinations, had the ill luck to find the destinies of those she loved unexpectedly influenced by the warlike spirit of the times. Poor Susan, restless and unhappy at home had entered into the service of her noble landlord's daughter, as her own woman; and, during the short peace which preceded Napoleon's return from Elba, the Lady Anne had been wooed and won by one of the gallant staff which surrounded the

great Duke; and too much attached to her husband to remain at a distance from the field of action, the young bride and her favourite waiting-maid were actually in Brussels during the crowning victory of Waterloo.

* * * * * *

"You are a soldier's sister, Susan," said the Lady Anne to her attendant, with her usual sweet grace, a few days after the great battle; "have you any objection to go with me this morning to the military hospital? A private belonging to my husband's division threw himself between him and a French cuirassier who was about to cut him down with his sabre, and received the blow destined for Sir Charles. Of course every care has been taken of him, and he is likely to recover, poor fellow, thank Heaven! but I wish to carry him a few comforts, to see with my own eyes

that he is kindly attended, and thank him with my own lips for preserving a life dearer than my own. Charles has sent to the surgeon to be in waiting: so order the carriage, and we will set forth."

Laden with comforts and restoratives, mistress and maid proceeded to the hospital, neither of them perhaps quite prepared for the inevitable horrors of the scene. Crowds of soldiers, for the most part severely wounded, filled the apartment into which they were ushered. Pain and death seemed busy around them. Sufferings, only the more affecting for the bravery with which they were borne, spoke in every countenance. Young, timid, and softly-nurtured, the Lady Anne, overcome by such a realization of the miseries of war as her imagination, even so close to the scene, had hardly pictured, delivered to the friendly surgeon a slip of paper upon which the name of her husband's

preserver was written. He led the way to a bed near a window.

"Poor fellow! his wars are over! Nay, nay, your Ladyship must not misunderstand me. His life is in no danger; but he has been compelled to submit to amputation: and as his friends are said to be well off, why the empty sleeve, in his case, will be only——"

His speech was checked by a sudden exclamation, almost a shriek, from his patient.

"Susan! Susan Wharton! my Susan!"

"Robin! dear Robin!"

Lady Anne knew the story, and witnessed the recognition with the sympathy of a young unpractised heart. She too had loved a soldier; and the poor sufferer now before her had received his hurt in that dear soldier's defence. Tears contended with smiles as she gazed upon the couple, already reunited, for Susan was

hanging over the couch, and her hand was locked in that of Robert. He looked at her wedding-finger: the ring was gone.

"Robin! dear Robin!" Her voice failed her.

"I know what you would say, Susan!" replied Robert. "It was your brother James. We met in Spain and he told me the whole truth. Do you remember my wicked vow? I am a poor maimed object now, Susan; I have no right hand to put the wedding-ring upon that dear finger——"

"But you can put the ring on with the left, dear Robin! You can put it on with the left!" said Susan, smiling through her tears: and never, in spite of pain, and wounds, and danger, and suffering, throbbed two happier hearts than those of the reconciled lovers, in the crowded wards of the Brussels hospital.

THE KING'S PAGE.

"If thou be he, then art thou prisoner!

SHAKSPEARE

THERE have been prisons of more pretension, as witness the cells of the Inquisition, and places of exile of grander name, the frozen deserts of Siberia for instance, or the sweltering swamps of Surinam; but for a chill, barren, heart-breaking monotony—a weary, dreary, dragging on of life, when all that renders life bearable is taken

away, commend me to a Prussian fortress during the reign of that literary coxcomb, small poet, eminent soldier, sad despot, but tolerably amusing, and by fits tolerably well natured personage, Frederick, misnamed the Great. To be sure the inmates, if it be true that the misfortunes of others convey some consolation in calamity, had the wretched comfort of knowing that from the whole country, flat, dull, and ugly enough at the best, being little better than a camp or a battle plain; the towns and cities, huge barracks; and every citizen, from the tottering great grandfather to the infant in the cradle, a soldier, past, present, or future, responsible for the slightest infringement of an all but impracticable military code; there was not an individual in the kingdom who might not be in an instant imprisoned like themselves. But without venturing to dispute the general truth of Rochefoucault's celebrated maxim,

it may be doubted whether the captive, pacing for the millionth time the stone floor of his dungeon, and vainly trying to divine the fault for which he was incarcerated, could derive much pleasure from reflecting that half his friends and kinsmen might at some future day be in equal jeopardy.

Next in discomfort to the prisoners within those dismal cells, were the jailers, who kept ward without, and who, cooped up between the walls of the fortress, were, as compared to those whom they guarded, pretty much as birds in an aviary compared with the same order of feathered bipeds in a cage. At Spandau the commandant, Major Kleinwitz, an invalid soldier, found so much difficulty in obtaining assistants for Hans Klaus, who had the dungeons in charge, that he thought himself lucky in gaining the service of a pretty youth, who called himself Wilhelm

Steinfort; an orphan, who, having recently lost an only brother, cared, he said, nothing for the world without the walls, and showed great zeal in assisting Klaus; who, lame from the consequences of an old wound, found much difficulty in passing up and down the steep stone stairs, whilst carrying their scanty meals to the miserable inmates of the cells.

Two or three, distinguished by triple padlocks, each boasting its different keys—keys whose intricacy and convolutions seemed dim forebodings of the wonders of Bramah,—were reserved by Klaus for his own especial attendance. One should think that Wilhelm saw enough of the poor captives; but these prisoners seemed to excite his curiosity not a little. One morning, taking advantage of a fit of good humour on the part of his master, and of his master's lady and mistress, Madame Klaus, he prevailed upon him to allow

each of the poor wretches a solitary walk in a small yard, closed in on every side by the steep walls of the fortress, and scarcely even at noon-tide admitting one glimpse of the blessed sun; and as they emerged, pale and haggard, into the light of day, he brushed the tears from his eyes, and gazed upon their wasted forms and wan complexions, with the eagerness with which a mother would seek for a missing child. Apparently Wilhelm's search had been in vain. One prisoner amongst those most carefully guarded, and one alone, had not shared an indulgence too dangerous for repetition. Wilhelm, as soon as he ascertained the fact, hastened to the triply locked door. "Max!" and the exclamation of surprise and joy with which that earnest whisper was acknowledged and reciprocated told at a word that the search was at an end.

For three weary days, days which,

although really of the shortest in January, seemed long as those of June, the triply barred door, with its panels of oak and studs of iron, remained betwixt them, a tantalizing and inexorable barrier. At last, Chance, always the good friend of those who watch to avail themselves of the opportunities which she presents, took the guise of a north-east wind, which affected Hans's wounded leg with as many aches and twinges as Prospero inflicted upon Caliban; and visited the wife of his bosom, Madame Klaus, with such a fit of rheumatic gout, most aristocratic of diseases, as would have done honour to a baroness of sixteen quarters. Hans Klaus could not have walked across the court to have exchanged the warder's keys for a field-marshal's baton; and Dame Gertrude could not have undone the easiest of the three padlocks to have been made first lady of the key to the empress. So they were forced to dele-

gate the office of bread-and-water carrier to the young boy Wilhelm.

"Max!" "Agatha!" And the twin brother and sister, for such they were, lay bathed in tears of mingled joy and sorrow, in each other's arms.

"How came you here?" asked Agatha, when their emotion had in part subsided; "You, Max von Lindorff, the King's Page, the favourite, trusted and beloved almost like a son! What can have been your offence? How came you here?"

"I can as little guess the cause of this imprisonment as you, sweet sister! I had served the King with wine the night before, as he sate at supper with M. de Voltaire and other gay and witty Frenchmen, himself gayest of all. The next morning Adolf von Rosenthal—Agatha, I cannot see your blushes, but this trembling hand tells of feelings which he would be right glad to hear! Adolf

avowed his love, and craved my intercession; and I was in the act, after one or two attempts, of sealing a letter to you, when the officer on guard, Count Waldemar, entered my apartment, put me under arrest, and whirled me off here to Spandau without a moment's pause. As little as yourself can I guess the cause. And now let me ask of you the same question. How came *you* hither, sister mine?"

Agatha hesitated, and the little hand which had before betrayed her consciousness again trembled, as the brother pressed it in his: "The Baron von Rosenthal"—she faltered; and her brother filled up the pause.

"Adolf! aye, doubtless, he ascertained my destination from Count Waldemar, and then communicated the intelligence to you. No truer friend than Adolf von Rosenthal! and yet I would not be sure that my calamity was altogether unwelcome, since it

procured him admission to his lady love. But now, dearest, away! Dally here no longer! leave the dungeon and the fortress! lay aside your disguise"——

"Instantly, dear Max," interrupted she, laughing, and beginning to divest herself of cap and doublet, and to replace them by her brother's habiliments: "Instantly! we have not a moment to lose. It was for this that I came; I shall remain in the cell, and you must pass for me, as, aided by the dark wintry weather, and our remarkable resemblance of figure, voice, and face, and these, my boyish garments, you well may do. Walk boldly into Dame Gertrude's apartments, and proffer to fetch from her gossip, Claudine, the miller's wife, the decoction of herbs, strange as the compound of a witch's cauldron, which she wants for her rheumatism. Once clear of the walls of Spandau, make straight for the frontier, and all will go well. No

remonstrance, no hesitation, no delay. This purse, too; take this purse! I shall be safe, I tell you; and when we shall have found out your crime, there will be some chance of procuring a pardon. All will be right, provided you be manageable! Away with you, Max!" And, in spite of contention and remonstrance, the brother was forced away, and the sister remained in his place, under a mixture of feelings that found vent first in hysterical laughter, then in hysterical sobs, and settled down at last into a trembling silence, a breathless pause of suspense and expectation, during which she seemed to hear her own heart beat, as she stood in the gloom and darkness.

Gradually, however, she became aware of sounds, the clang of gate and drawbridge, the clattering of arms and trampling of horses, which, piercing as they did through the massive walls of the inner

court, indicated no common confusion in the fortress; so that when Klaus, accompanied by a corporal's guard, made his appearance in the doorway, she was, to a certain degree, prepared for the discovery of her scheme and the recapture of the prisoner.

The jailer, however, appeared still in a state of mystification. "I knew that I should find Master Max safe in his apartment," muttered Hans Klaus, with considerable exultation. "My birds seldom get out of their cages. Come along, can't you?" cried he, in a sharp voice, to the corporal, as he swung along upon his crutches, with an activity wholly belying the incapacity of motion of which I spoke a few sentences back, that extraordinary and preternatural activity belonging to a lame man, when *the* one motive, the key of the clock, has been found, and the machinery has been fairly set in motion. "Get on, I

tell you," cried the jailer to the corporal; "I knew that I should find him. A prisoner escape from Spandau, indeed! That seems likely!"

Agatha had seen and heard enough to take her measures. Max has been met and stopped, and brought back, thought she, and we are to be confronted. Now Heaven send him a good gift of impudence, and surely that is a commodity in which a court page can hardly be defective, and we shall baffle them yet.

So thinking, she followed Klaus to the guard-room, fully prepared to find that her brother had been arrested, but a little disconcerted to see seated in an arm-chair at the head of the table, the identical adust, stiff, soldier-looking personage, with his cocked hat, jack-boots, and shabby uniform, known to his loving subjects as Frederick the Great.

"Here, an' please your Majesty," said

Klaus, pointing with his crutch to the youth in his page's dress, whom he poked forward as he spoke, "here is my prisoner, Maximilian von Lindorf. The other boy is, as I said before, a lad called Wilhelm Steinfort, whom I and my old dame, waxing somewhat stiff, have hired to scrub down the courts, cut wood, and carry water. He was only going some quarter of a league for a decoction of"——

"Bah!" interrupted the King, "we did not come here to inquire into thy wife's rheumatism. Why, truly, Rosenthal, I think there be two of them. Come hither, master page."

Both youths advanced to the table.

"I called Maximilian von Lindorff only," added Frederick. "Which of you answers to that name?"

"I do," replied two voices, equally musical, to the right and left.

"Indeed! Who was your father?"

"Ernest von Lindorff, a Lieutenant-General in your Majesty's service," answered the two voices in duet.

"What is your age?"

"Seventeen the twentieth of last July," said both.

"Which of ye is the real prisoner?"

"I am," replied the two.

"Wilhelm! Wilhelm! The boy is crazy," interposed the jailer.

"Hold your peace, Master Klaus," said the King quickly; "according to their own confession, here was one prisoner upon the point of escaping."

"I am the prisoner," reiterated both.

"Which of ye hath a sister, the Fraulein Agatha?"

"I have!"

"Let me finish *my* sentence," quoth his Majesty. "Don't be in such haste, young Sirs, you are coming to *your* sentence fast enough. And you, Master

Jailer, let me see no more winking and nodding, and sign-making to the young boy whom thou call'st Wilhelm, but who answers to the name of Max. Canst not thou let him go to the gallows his own way. Take care of thine own neck, Master Klaus, which may be in jeopardy here for playing fast and loose with thy prisoners. Hearken, young Sirs," pursued his Majesty, resuming the examination. "Which of ye hath a sister, the Fraulein Agatha,"—here he paused a moment, and both were preparing to answer, "I have;" the words were forming on each rosy mouth; when he continued deliberately— "who is in love with my aide-de-camp here, the Baron Rosenthal?"

The reply, which, as I have said, hung trembling on either tongue, was suddenly cut short as the one face covered with blushes, after a shy stolen glance at the fellow culprit's half amused, half sympa-

thizing countenance, seemed sinking to the ground with shame; whilst Rosenthal, provoked, astonished, and confused, looked almost as guilty as the prisoners.

The King went on with his questions. "You have such a sister, then, as the young lady who is in love with the Baron? —eh? Did you speak, my Lord?" said Frederick, interrupting himself, as Rosenthal, vexed at heart for the vexation of his blushing lady love, uttered an impatient quirk behind the royal chair. "Hum! I thought you wished to suggest some enquiry, Monsieur le Baron. You did not, you say? Well! then you have such a sister as this Fraulein Agatha, the inamorato of the Baron here? And this leads us to the crime, for crime it is," continued Frederick, with a degree of seriousness which communicated a corresponding degree of apprehension to all who heard him.

"Do you know anything of this bit of paper?" asked he, sternly, producing from his pocket a scrap of writing, of which the top and the bottom and one corner seemed to be torn off.

"Would you believe, gentlemen?" continued the Majesty of Prussia, turning rapidly from Major Kleinwitz to Baron Rosenthal; "would you think it possible, that the son of a brave soldier like Lindorff, who died in my arms, on the field of battle—that his son, brought up in my household, treated as a child of my own, should write of me in terms like these?—in terms amounting to treason," added he, waxing warmer as he described the guilt of the culprit. "Which of ye owns this scroll? Let none own it lightly, for it will be found to contain no slight matter. Read it, Kleinwitz. I picked it up myself under the boy's window at Potsdam. I

know the writing well, having before now employed the ingrate as my amanuensis. Read."

He fixed his eyes on the culprits, who listened with surprise and alarm as Kleinwitz read. Thus ran the scroll :—

"So much for Rosenthal's petition, sweet sister, which I pray you to answer favourably. You cannot do otherwise, for I know that you have long loved him. For other matters we go on much as usual. The tyrant"—

"Here," said Kleinwitz, "some words are missing,—'got drubbed most famously last night by' "——

"And here some more, Sire," continued Kleinwitz, compassionately; "this scrawl is imperfect."

"Go on!" was the stern command.

"May this country soon be rid of him."

"That meaning is plain enough, Major

Kleinwitz. Is it not?" said the Monarch coldly. "There is no riddle there. The treason is plain and simple and so shall be the doom."

"Suffer me to complete the sentence," said one of the culprits, producing from the page's dress a morsel of paper which exactly fitted the scrawl in question.

"Sister!" cried Max in great perplexity, tugging at her sleeve—the sleeve of his own doublet upon Agatha's arm; "Sister, for Heaven's sake! better die!"

"Better live, Max!" returned his sister, smiling. "I know what I'm about, and the truth shall out, the truth, and the whole truth, Max! Read, Major Kleinwitz. No, not that nonsense at the beginning," added she, with a renewal of the shamefacedness which did so much injustice to her page's attire.

"No need to read that nonsense! Be-

gin there!" And the goodnatured commandant read:—

"We get on much as usual. The tyrant of [*literature, Voltaire,*] got drubbed last night most unmercifully by [*our good old Fritz.*] Be it ominous, and the country soon rid of him [*for ever.*"]

"Pardon, Sire, the impertinent expression! It was a boy's flippancy, repented as soon as written, torn away, and, as I believe, destroyed. Pardon that impertinence, and, above all, forgive her whose only fault was a too deep love of her twin brother. Pardon, Sire, I beseech thee."

"Did old Fritz give Voltaire a sound drubbing, Max, in the match of wit we played last night? Good faith, I believe he did!" chuckled the King. "And thou wilt be glad to be quit of him! Well, if that be the worst treason we meet with, the fortress of Spandau may go empty.

Here is one fair prison-breaker though," added he, drawing Agatha gently towards him, "and the best way to dispose of her will be to give her her choice of warders, Hans Klaus or Baron Rosenthal."

END OF VOL. II.

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HURST AND BLACKETT, SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

Swallowfield

The Residence of Miss Mitford

ATHERTON,

AND

OTHER TALES.

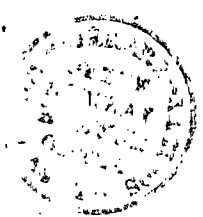
BY

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,

AUTHOR OF "OUR VILLAGE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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THE PLOUGHING MATCH.

"To hold the plough for her sweet love.
SHAKESPEARE.

A PLEASANT and a stirring scene was the barn-yard of Farmer Holden of Hilton, one of the principal tenants of our friend Colonel Lisle of that ilk (if it be permitted to a Southron to borrow that expressive phrase), on one of the pleasantest and sunniest evenings of this last most sunny month of April, when, as if to overset all the calculations of all the almanac-makers from Mr. Murphy downward, and in direct

defiance of those safer general prognostics derived from old experience, there has not fallen in this fair county of Berks, from the first to the thirtieth, one single drop of rain. A bright and a lively scene did the barn-yard of Hilton Great Farm exhibit on that bright April evening. Seen between the large wheat-ricks and bean-stacks and hay-ricks, the barns and stables, the cart-houses, hen-houses, and pig-sties, which, together with the old-fashioned rambling dwelling-house, large enough to form two or three fine cottage-ornées in these degenerate days; seen between the various buildings which with all conceivable irregularity surrounded the spacious farm-yard, glittering with the clean crisp covering of straw with which it was very literally littered, and giving due token of their presence by bleatings of lambs seeking their mothers, and ewes in pursuit of their lambs, by barking of

dogs and shoutings of men and boys, were the fine flocks of Farmer Holden returning from their distant pastures to the fold in a rich meadow near the homestead; horses mounted by young carter-boys sitting loungingly upon their naked backs, and riding them to and from the village pond with an indescribable air of lazy pride; whilst cows, driven by urchins on foot somewhat brisker, but every whit as dirty, stumbled amongst the sheep and jostled the horses in their haste to reach the calves, who were lowing in their pens eager for the moment that should at once appease their own "pleasant enemy Hunger," and relieve the "mothers of the herd" of their milky burthen.

Mingled with these larger comers and goers, biped and quadruped, together with occasional passers-by, as the thresher or the seedsman flung himself heavily over the threshold of the barn, or the ploughman stalked from the stable to the hay-

rick, were innumerable lesser denizens of this well-peopled agricultural demesne. Pigs of all ages and all sizes lay wallowing about the yard; and poultry of every denomination, from geese and turkeys to bantams and pigeons, cackled at the barn-doors, dabbled in the ponds, fluttered discontented in the coops, or perched in happy freedom on the roofs of the different buildings; whilst one or two small and pretty children, one with a kitten in his hand, leaning over the low hatch-gate which extended from side to side of the deep old porch, as if longing to escape from this their own peculiar coop, added to the general agreeableness of the picture. Sweetbriar in its tender green and its fresh fragrance grew on one side of that old dark porch, and an early honeysuckle, already putting forth its buds, flourished on the other. July-stocks, wall-flowers, and polyanthuses, sent their sweet breath through the lattice windows divided by

rich stone mullions; a large cherry-tree waved its snowy blossoms, scattering light at one end of the house, backed by a rich rosy-tinted, almond-scented, orchard, whilst in a nook between a dark fagot-pile and a huge open cart-house, the sun glanced upwards on an old elder-tree, turning the trunk into gold, and the wide-spreading branches drooping with the weight of the redundant foliage, and the swelling flower-buds into pendant emeralds; the clouds were white and fleecy, the sky of the brightest and purest blue, and the woody uplands which formed the framework of the scenery full of hedge-row timber just putting forth its youngest and most delicate "greenth."

A gay and a pretty picture was that crowded farm-yard, and yet the two principal figures still remain undescribed. Seated upon a low wooden stool, engaged in the operation of administering certain

small pellets of dough to some threescore of callow, gaping, struggling goslings—(in the pure Doric of Berkshire this operation is called "pilling the gulls")—was a young woman of middle height, whose person, sufficiently well formed but somewhat large-boned and muscular, betokened such an union of activity and strength as might probably be more common in the weaker sex if the bountiful intentions of Nature were duly seconded by education and circumstance—if girls took more exercise and passed more time in the open air. Her face could hardly be called pretty, far less beautiful; and yet in the bright laughing eyes, the red lips just enough divided to show the pearly teeth, and a dimple on one corner of the mouth, the clear healthy sunburnt complexion, and an expression compounded of frankness, sweetness, and gaiety, there was more of charm than is often to be found

in the most regular beauty. And so in good truth thought her companion.

She, from her occupation and her dress, her dark cotton gown, her double muslin handkerchief, her simple cap, as well as the sleeves turned up above her elbows, and the coloured apron tied over the white one, was evidently a farm-house serving-maiden just tidied up after going through the most laborious of her many offices, and finishing her day's work by supplying the manifold wants of her feathered charges, and milking the kine, if indeed the calves did not spare her the trouble. *He*, a fine-looking young man, rather tall than short, but firmly and vigorously formed, with a bright open countenance and a glowing complexion, was as evidently a farmer's son. His straw hat was placed rather on one side on his glossy auburn curls, with the true air of a village beau, and his dark velveteen jacket and

the silk handkerchief just knotted round his throat, had as much of real study in the apparent carelessness of their adjustment as would have done honour to the veriest coxcomb of one-and-twenty that ever danced at Almack's—personal vanity being astonishingly alike in all stations. A coxcomb, I grieve to say, was Maurice Elliott, and yet, being heartily in love, he had the best chance that could befall him of getting rid of his coxcombry. At present, however, to judge of the dialogue passing between them, their "course of true love" was very far from "running smooth." It was more like a game of cross purposes than a meeting at sunset between two lovers.

"You won't go with me, then, to the Maying, Phœbe?" said the youth impatiently, twisting round his fingers a long supple branch which he had just twitched from a weeping-willow that overhung the

goose-pond, never dreaming the while that he was, so far as action went, emulating one of the most eloquent women that ever graced blue stockings. "You won't go with me to the Maying?"

"You won't try for a prize at the ploughing-match, Maurice? You really won't try? really and indeed you won't?" rejoined the damsel, poking one of her pellets with a little stick down a gosling's throat, and following the dose by a drop or two of water to clear the passage for another morsel. "Do try, Maurice!" continued she in a tone of voice sweet and round and youthful,—a spoken smile. "Do try!"

"When I know," cried Maurice, still twisting the unlucky bit of willow, "that you have got leave to go out that very day! Of course to the Maying! and not to go with me!" And Maurice gave the bit of willow which he twisted round his finger such a tug with his other hand as had

nearly cut that useful member to the bone. "Got leave to go, and won't go with me!"

"When you won't try at the plough"—

"Hang the ploughing-match!" ejaculated Maurice, shaking his discomfited finger; "hang the ploughing-match!"

"When you won't try for a prize," continued Phœbe, quietly taking another gosling upon her lap, "you who know that you can plough as straight a furrow as old Giles Dowling himself!"

"Hang Giles Dowling, Phœbe! My father was a farmer, and though, to please him, and since his death to humour mother, I may have gone between the stilts, there's no need to let myself down in the eyes of the whole parish. What would that cold, sneering, purse-proud, uncle of mine and his fine daughters say, I wonder? Come, Phœbe, don't look so grave—you 'll go to the Maying, won't you? What can hinder

you, now that you have got leave? Come, and I'll drive you in my own chaise-cart with my new chesnut horse."

"What would your proud uncle and your fine cousins say to *that*, I wonder? You are a farmer's son, as you truly say, Mr. Maurice Elliott, and I am a labourer's daughter. God forbid that I should be ashamed of being the child of an honest man, let his condition be ever so poor!" and Phœbe, though her tone was gentle, drew her stool a little back with an air of self-respect that approached to dignity.

Her lover felt the reproof.

"Forgive me, dearest Phœbe! pray, pray forgive me! I did not intend—I did not dream—oh! Phœbe, I never think of you but as one so much better than myself! You do forgive me then?" said he, answering the bright dimpled smile which required no words to confirm her pardon. "You do forgive me, and you 'll

let me drive you to this Maying? We are to have a cricket-match and a dance, and it will be so pretty a sight! Why do you shake your head? Is there any secret in the matter?"

"No secret at all, Maurice," said Phœbe. "I'll tell you the truth; you'll not be ashamed of it, though your fine cousins would. Poor uncle George has been so ill this spring that he has not been able to get his allotment dug or planted, and you know the allotment ground is his chief dependence. The children would be half starved without the vegetables, and the refuse keeps the pig. So father and mother are going to give him a day's labour to get in the potatoes, and I'm going to help. That's my holyday, and a very happy one it will be. Uncle George was always so good to me, and so was aunt, and I love the children dearly. You 'll see what a day's work I shall do."

"Dear, good Phœbe! I wish I could help too; only I have promised to make one of the eleven, and I can't desert them just at last. But I'll tell you what I can do. Your little cousin George, who lives with us, I can let him go home and help."

Another bright smile repaid the kindness.

"But this ploughing-match, Maurice! that will be a pretty sight too! And you, who can do everything better than the other lads of the parish, why should not you be as proud of being the best ploughman as the best cricketer or the best shot? Nay, but you must listen to me, Maurice: whatever the purse-proud uncle or the fine cousins may say, I have good cause to believe that your trying for the prize would please one person besides myself—your own good landlord, Colonel Lisle."

Maurice's brow darkened. He drew up his person to his full stature and spoke angrily and bitterly—

"My own good landlord! Would you believe, Phœbe, that after living upon his estate, I and my fathers, these three hundred years and more, paying his rent to a day, and doing as much justice to his land as if it were really our own, this good landlord of ours, the lease being upon the point of expiring, has sent us notice to quit? actually sent us notice to quit!" He turned away in proud and angry sorrow.

"Notice! but has any one taken the farm?" inquired Phœbe.

"Not yet, I fancy; but he will find no difficulty in letting it. The lands lie close to my uncle's, and I have sometimes thought—at all events we have notice."

"But for what reason?"

"Oh! your rich landlord can easily find a reason for ridding himself of a poor tenant. The message was civil enough as regarded mother. If she had wished to remain in the farm he would have had no

objection; but, as her request was that the lease might be renewed in my favour, he could not comply. I was unfit for a farmer, he said; never in my business, always shooting, or coursing, or cricketing; never at home; never attending to the main chance; unthrifty in everything; and about, he heard"——and then, suddenly, Maurice Elliott checked himself, and paused.

"About to marry a poor girl without a farthing, when you might have married your cousin Harriet with more money than I know how to reckon. Oh! Maurice! Maurice! little did I think when your own dear mother gave her consent, because I was active and industrious and an honest man's daughter, and because the son she loved so well loved me, little did I think that she would be turned from her home for that great goodness. But it must not be, dear Maurice! We must part! We

must not marry, to have your mother turned out of doors; neither of us would be happy so. I can speak to my mistress —she is so very kind—and go to live with her friends a great way off. And you will give up coursing and shooting (you know you have promised me to do that), and then, when Colonel Lisle finds that your heart *is* in your business, all will go right, and you will stay at the Linden Farm, and we shall be happy."—And by way of earnest of this coming felicity, poor Phœbe burst into a violent fit of sobbing.

Maurice exhausted himself in protestations—to do him justice, most sincere—of love, everlasting love, to Phœbe, and hatred, equally durable and equally sincere, towards uncle, cousin, landlord, and, in short, all who sought to separate him from his beloved; assuring her that Colonel Lisle's whole estate would not bribe him to renounce his engagement; that, go

where she might, he would follow; and that, so far from desiring to continue at their old home, nothing would induce him to remain the tenant of a landlord so unjust and despotic, one who had condemned, without hearing, the descendant of a race who had lived under his father and his father's fathers—ay, even from the planting of the great lime-trees which gave their name to the farm. But if Maurice was vehement, Phœbe, whose hysterical sobbing had ended in quiet and relieving tears, continued gently firm.

"You would not make me wretched, Maurice; I know that you would not; and how could I be otherwise if I were to cause your ruin? I shall go into Kent, to Mrs. Holden's sister, and Colonel Lisle will think better than to dismiss the son of his old tenant. Go to him, dear Maurice! Speak to him yourself! Explain—"

"Go to him, indeed! Speak to him! Explain! I can tell you, Phœbe, that he must come to me if he wishes me to stay upon his land. There are other farms in the county beside his. We are no bond-slaves, blessed be God! in merry England. But don't you go, Phœbe! Stay and let me tell you of my plans; or, if you must go, promise at least to see me, and to give me a full hearing, before you leave Hilton. Promise me this. Stay at least till this ploughing-match is over. That will be a holiday far and near. See me then, and I will let this dear hand go."

And Phœbe, blushing, sighing, and protesting against a meeting which would only be a renewal of pain, did, however, give the required promise; and the lovers parted—she for her in-door duties, he for the home he was soon to relinquish.

They who witness those pretty rural festivals, with all their picturesque acces-

sories of tent and marquee, banners and bands, gay and happy crowds, shaded by noble trees and lighted by bright sunshine, and fanned by the sweet airs of the fairest of the seasons; or they who read the elaborate account of the day's proceedings in the county newspapers, where all is chronicled, *en couleur de rose*, from the earliest procession to the latest cheer, little guess the trouble, and turmoil, and *tracasseries* which this apparently most amicable, and peaceful celebration occasions in its district. The ostensible competitors, whose province is to contend for the prizes, are for the most part (the winners being satisfied, of course, and the losers soothed and comforted by encouraging speeches and a good dinner,—solid pudding added to empty praise) as good-humoured and contented as heart can desire; their unlucky patrons and protectors, the Association, in its own proper person, having pre-

viously gone through as much fussing and disputing, squabbling and quarrelling, as would carry a candidate through a county election, or produce a tragedy upon the boards of a theatre-royal.

One committee-man threatened to resign because he was not a vice-president; and one vice-president did send in his resignation because he was not the president. One very great man (an Earl), applied to to assume that high office, never answered the secretary's letter; and another great man (a Viscount), coquetted, and poohed, and pshawed, and finally declined, because the Earl had been written to first. The committee had five meetings, to consider of the place where they ought to meet; four to consider of the day of celebration; three of the hour of dinner; and the grand question of in doors or out of doors, marquee or barn, very nearly caused a dissolution of the society; party having

run so high that two of the members, after scolding themselves hoarse, arrived at that state of dumb resentment which answers to the white heat of the anvil, and did not speak. They quarrelled about the value of the clothes, about the devices of the banners, about the colours of the cockades,—in short, there was nothing which admitted of two opinions about which they did not quarrel; so that the chief dignitaries of the association, the chairman, treasurer, and secretary, who had endeavoured to add to their several offices that of pacificators-general, declared that all the ploughmen and all their teams would not work half as hard on the day of trial as they had done during the time of preparation.

But if this spirit of opposition, for opposition's sake, be a little too much the fashion in our free country, where the good yeoman who subscribes his five shil-

lings claims "a voice potential, as double as the duke's," who lays down his twenty pounds, (and that the facts are little exaggerated will be readily admitted by most who have been behind the scenes in such societies,) so let me proudly say the ill-humour, having once found a vent, works itself clear, and the rough, burly disputants come round again, shake hands, and hear reason, with a readiness and facility just as characteristic of our national manners, where a squabble once over is over for ever, and a quarrel fairly reconciled only leaves the opponents faster friends than before. Accordingly, by the time the appointed day arrived all was peace, and amity, and joyous bustle, and the scene took its usual cordial and hearty character of a meeting calculated to advance the interests and promote the happiness of all classes.

Some weeks had elapsed since the

dialogue between the lovers in Farmer Holden's barn-yard, and reports were rife in the village of a strange change in the fortunes of the young tenant of the Linden Farm. His father's will, it was said, threw him entirely into the power of his hard-hearted and purse-proud uncle, Stephen Elliott. There were different versions of the story, and no one spoke as of positive knowledge; but one fact seemed certain, that Maurice's negociation for a farm of the same extent with that which he now occupied, had been cut short by the intervention of his stern relative, and that he was now seeking to rent a few acres of pasture-land attached to a cottage in the Moors. He and Phœbe had not met; but, pursuant to her promise, she had not left Hilton, and was now dressing for the ploughing-match at her mother's cottage, with a feeling of light-heartedness for which she would have found it difficult to

account. Was she—could she be conscious that her lover's gaze was fixed upon her through the open door? or was the knowledge that he was no longer the rich, and, to use the country phrase, the somewhat prodigal young farmer, but nearer her own level, brightening her eyes, and glowing in her cheek, with a hope unacknowledged even to her own heart? Or did she give more credit than she thought she did to the report of her little cousin George, that he and his master were, after all, to try for the prizes at the ploughing-match? Phœbe knew that Stephen Elliott had said, with his scornful sneer and bitter tone, "Let him try for the suit of clothes—he may want 'em!" and Phœbe knew enough of her lover's temper to feel that this very taunt, uttered to keep him from the scene, was likely to take a different effect upon his high spirit. "At all events," thought

she, "I shall see him!" and she dressed herself in a flutter of spirits, with which vanity had little to do, and then sat down quietly to await her father, whom she was to accompany, and to whom the first prize was allotted, as having brought up a large family in credit and respectability, without receiving parochial assistance. The hale old man, in his well-preserved Sunday coat, with his grey hair smoothed down over his honest face, and his pretty daughter hanging upon his arm, as they walked on the ground after the match was over, formed one of the most interesting groups of the day.

The scene was really beautiful. Upon an extensive lawn, richly dotted with magnificent trees, and backed by a noble mansion embowered in woods, stood a splendid central marquee, with smaller tents on either side; flags and banners waved round the tents, and crowned the

lofty decorated building arched with lilacs and laburnams, where the gentlemen were to dine; and the large, low, open cart-house, overhung by a down-hanging elm, prepared for the ploughmen; carriages were driven up in close succession, horses prancing, music playing, and (to borrow the words of the *County Chronicle*) all the beauty and fashion of the neighbourhood were collected in front of the tents to witness the distribution of the prizes, and, best of all, they who had earned those prizes, and sturdy tillers of the soil, clean, healthy, and happy, their delighted wives and daughters, and the stout yeomen their masters, triumphing in the success of their labourers. Add to this the lucky accident of a sunny day in the most genial of the seasons, and every advantage of light, and shadow, and shifting clouds, and the result will be a scene too wide for the painter, but rich, and bright,

and joyous as ever inspired a poet in the merry month of May.

Phœbe looked only for one figure,—and there, dressed like the rest of the competitors in a white smock-frock, his head decked with a double cockade, as winner not only of the regular match, but of a subsequent prize for ploughing with two horses, stood Maurice Elliott, and close beside him her little cousin George, sticking his hat, also doubly cockaded, as high as possible upon his head, and fairly standing on tiptoe, that his honours might be more conspicuous. Near him, so placed as to appear to belong rather to the gentry than to the wealthy yeomen, in which order he was really classed, leaned his uncle Stephen, his accustomed scornful sneer darkened as if by stronger passions.

The ceremony and its attendant speeches being over, Colonel Lisle approached Phœbe and her father, now also wearing

the decorations of the day, and joined by little George, and, patting the boy's cheek, he said graciously to the old man, "Why, you and your nephew are carrying off all our prizes."

"Add his son-in-law, if you please, Sir," said Maurice Elliott, approaching the group, holding in one hand the hat decked with its blue cockades of success, and shaking hands heartily with the grey-headed and venerable old peasant: "Add his son-in-law; for such I shall be as soon as the banns can be published, for I have no money now to throw away upon a licence. All is settled," continued he in a lower tone to the old man; "Phœbe consented as soon as ever I proved to her that not only my happiness but my prosperity depended upon my marrying such a wife as herself—pooh! as soon as I proved that my happiness depended upon my marrying *her*—for there is not such

another in the world; and Joseph Clarkson, finding that I am to have her to manage the dairy, has consented to let me rent his thirty acres down in the Moors, and the little homestead belonging to it. There 's a capital garden; and during my spare time I shall raise vegetables for the Belford market, and mother 'll live with us; and you 'll see how happy we shall be!" And happiness danced in the young man's eyes as, again wringing the old labourer's hand, he turned away to join his Phœbe.

"Stop!" exclaimed Colonel Lisle, who, irresistibly attracted by the sudden alteration in his tenant's manner and conduct, had been unable to refrain from listening to the conversation—"Stop one moment, Maurice Elliott," said he, kindly; "and tell me what this means!—Joseph Clarkson's land in the Moors! and your mother to live with you there! Why, in leaving

the Linden, there will be the stock, and the crops, and the farming utensils, enough, whether you retain or dispose of them, to set you up in one of the best farms in the county. All was left, I know, to you and your mother. Surely you have not, since your father's death, involved yourself in such a debt as to render this change of situation necessary ?"

"I owe no man a farthing, Sir," replied Maurice, with some pride of accent and manner: then, catching the kindly glance of his landlord, he continued, mildly and respectfully, "Everything was left to my mother and myself; but, either by accident or design—I believe—I am sure by accident—the will is so worded, that although, in case of our continuing at the Linden Farm, the stock and property of every sort were to remain for my use, upon paying a small annuity to my mother, yet, if we removed, it appears

that the whole is to be sold; the money to be invested in the 3 per cents., and not to be touched either by her or me until her death—neither of us receiving any benefit from this sum beyond the yearly payment of her annuity—which, Heaven grant, may continue for many years!"

"This is new to me, Maurice, and strange as well as new. Who is the executor?"

"Mr. Stephen Elliott, my uncle."

"Humph!—your uncle! Have you seen the will? Has any lawyer seen it? Your uncle, Mr. Stephen Elliott, is the executor, you say? Is the will in your father's hand-writing?"

"No, Sir; in that of Mr. Ball."

"The little pettifogging lawyer, of Bewley—a man thirty miles off—Stephen Elliott's factotum: I thought so. Well! we must get some one learned in the law to look over it. Not to touch the money

till after your mother's death! — That could never have been the design of the testator, however well it might meet the views of——. This must be looked to, Maurice: send me a copy of the will."

"You are very good, Sir," replied Maurice, firmly; "but, with all gratitude for your kindness, I have made up my mind to let the matter rest. Firmly as I believe that my father did not contemplate this state of things—that he never dreamt of our leaving the Linden Farm, it is nevertheless so set down; and there is something in contesting the last will of a parent which I cannot endure. Besides, we shall do very well. My mother will have the comforts to which she has been accustomed, if my labour can provide them; and it will be better for me to be a working-man. I was getting to like sporting better than farming. Phœbe said so, Sir, as well as you. But now all that

is out of the question. I can work, as I have proved to her; and, with her for a companion and a reward, I shall be a happier man at the Moors than I should have been in our old house, well as I love it."

"Better and happier perhaps than you might have been, had this not occurred," replied Colonel Lisle, grasping his young tenant's hand with a pressure full of heart; "but not better or happier than you will be there now. The new lease shall be made out to-morrow. Your uncle, for views of his own, and in revenge for your refusal of his daughter, represented you to me as dissipated, idle, extravagant, and careless of all except the caprice of the hour. He even contrived to turn your love for Phœbe into a proof of the lowness of your mind and degradation of your habits. Under this view I sent the notice, fully intending however, especially after I found that he wanted the farm, to examine

more closely into the facts. I ought to have looked into the matter at once; but I can hardly regret not having done so, since the experiment has not only made your character better known to me, but to yourself. And now you must introduce me to Phœbe! There she stands, looking at us;—no! now that she sees that we are looking at her, she turns away, blushing. But that is Phœbe!—I should know the fresh, innocent smile among a thousand.

And, as a lover of all justice—even that shadowy justice called poetical, which is the branch over which we poor authors have most control—I must add, that, whilst Phœbe's smiles grew sweeter and sweeter, as her blushes deepened, Stephen Elliott, the rich and purse-proud uncle, who had crept stealthily within hearing of the conversation, and felt himself detected and defeated, slunk away, hanging down

his head, pale with impotent malice, and muttering ineffectual curses, the most contemned and miserable wretch of that large assembly.

THE ROUNDHEAD'S DAUGHTER.

"Is this our foeman's face? Ah, no! no! no!"

SHAKSPEARE.

A FAIRER damsel never graced the pinched coif and demure kerchief of the puritans than Mabel Goodwin, as she stood, one sultry afternoon in the merry month of June, wreathing a straggling honeysuckle round a mossy sundial in the deserted pleasaunce of Temple Laleham. The scene of its accessories were not unworthy of the blooming maiden, a very rose-bud for beauty and youthfulness,

whose swift and airy motions seemed to throw light and sunshine over the picture; and yet there was a strange contrast between her bright and beaming loveliness and the neglect and desolation of all around.

The magnificent mansion, one of the spacious and picturesque manor houses of Elizabeth's days, erected, as the name would import, upon the site of a still more extensive residence or preceptory of the proud order of St. John of Jerusalem, had been shut up since the establishment of the commonwealth; its former possessor, Sir Philip Montresor, a staunch old cavalier, having been in exile since the star of Cromwell had been in the ascendant; and Colonel Goodwin, in virtue of a decree of the committee of sequestration, its present owner, a plain soldier and a zealous roundhead, rigid, self-denying, and averse from luxury as the Protector himself, preferring

the humble dwelling of his forefathers, the home of his boyhood, to the splendid abode of the royal favourite.

Desolated it was, with its barred windows, its silent courts, the grass growing on its noble terraces, the statues and urns that crowned the marble balustrades broken and overthrown, nettles and briars forcing their way between the broad flights of steps, wall-flowers and snap-dragons flourishing in every nook of the richly carved stone mullions. Desolation triumphed over all; and yet so picturesque was the building, with its elaborate variety of outline, its pointed roofs and gable ends and clustered chimneys, its turrets and porches and pinnacles, its deep bay windows and projecting oriels, the play of light and shadow, and the mellow tinting of the weather-stained walls, and it is doubtful if a painter's eye would not have found more gratification in contemplating

the mansion, silent and deserted as it was, a model of the poetical architecture of an age when that grandest of the arts had not yet subsided into dull prose, than to have gazed on its spacious courts, crowded with knight and squire, groom and page, with stately dames and mincing damsels, on that day for ever memorable in the annals of the Montresors, when the Virgin Queen, in one of her progresses, deigned not only to sleep a night at Temple Laleham, but even to dance a coranto with its master.

If the hall were still fair to the sight, the park, or rather chase in which it stood, presented a scene of unrivalled beauty. Clumps of oaks and beeches, old enough to have witnessed the stern and warlike exercises, and to have listened to the choral hymns of the Knights Templars; an avenue of elms, above a mile in length, pillared and arched like the aisle of some mighty cathedral; thickets of old thorns

covered with pearly blossoms, mingled with the paler foliage of the feathery birch, rising from an undergrowth of fern, amongst which the deer were lying in scattered groups, whilst large herds were grazing upon the rich herbage, approaching close to the mansion, as conscious that they had little to fear from the intrusion of man; a piece of water that might almost be called a lake, piercing the depth of the woods, and giving back in its bright mirror the rich and varied forest scenery, and the light and fleecy cloudlets of the summer sky; a ruined tower on an eminence upon the other side of the mere, whose walls, covered with ivy, were said to have belonged to a watch-tower in the days of the preceptory; and, nearer the house, some broken ground, part of which had been fish-ponds, now filled up with a growth of alders and other moisture-loving trees, whilst under a steep declivity appeared the

low arch of a deserted grotto, half covered with pendent plants; all this, set off by the strong light and shadow of a sunny day in June, formed a picture of no common interest and beauty.

The pleasaunce too, with its rose-bushes and other flowering shrubs, turned into actual trees, bending under the weight of their blossoms, and the formal parterres—thanks to Mabel's love of gardening, bright with pinks and sweet-williams, larkheels, (so Fletcher hath it,) marigolds and gillistocks—the pleasaunce exhibited a strange mixture of gaiety and desolation.

The sparkling fountain, whose waters, shimmering in the sunshine, glittered like showers of diamonds, no longer cooled and refreshed the noontide air. That light was extinguished; those streams had ceased to flow. Even the quaint basin, carved like a huge cockle shell, such as a few centuries before might have been seen amongst

the followers of the Knights of the Temple, denoting the pilgrims from the Holy Land, —that shell-like basin, whose small reservoir at once supplied and received the slender jets of water which dropped into the shallow pool with a sound so lulling and so musical, was broken now and dry. Even those twin hedges of holly and yew, the living walls as smooth as masonry, surmounted at regular distances by figures bearing remote resemblances to phœnixes or peacocks, dragons or bears, or other birds and animals, existent or non-existent —those hedges, pride of the old gardener's art, which sheltered at once the flower-plots from the bleak north-east, and the chaste dames of the hall from intrusion or observation, had now, escaped from the shears, broken into a wild luxuriance of vegetation; so that the spreading branches and projecting tops had not merely obliterated all traces of their former trim and

painful clippings, but had by their irregular and disproportioned growth thrown the crowning monsters into inextricable confusion. The closely shaven turf was overrun with moss; the gravel paths were covered with grass and weeds; in short, at Temple Laleham nature was every where triumphing over art.

And amongst the fairest of nature's works might be reckoned the blooming rose-bud, Mabel Goodwin. She had finished her task of twisting the straggling honeysuckle round the old sun-dial, already garlanded with the pink purple flowers of the sweet-pea; and after gazing earnestly from side to side of that flowery prison, the pleasaunce, enclosed as it was by its high walls of yew and holly, and peeping cautiously, in an attitude compounded of looking and listening, through an arch cut in the thick hedge, which led into the chase; after glancing some-

what impatiently up at the old clock-tower, which still held its stately place amongst the gilded vanes and richly carved pinnacles of the mansion, although the machinery had ceased to perform its office, and the deep solemn tongue which seemed to convey a warning upon the flight of time, as it told the hours, had long been mute,—and casting another fruitless and pettish look at the old sun-dial, which had lost its gnomon,—and then, holding her fair hand so as to shade her eyes from the glare, gazed to somewhat more purpose upon the bright sun, whose course in the heavens no neglect of man could stay or change; after three several vain attempts to ascertain the hour, she turned rapidly round as a slight sound caught her quick ear, and was aware of a young man, whose simple garb could not conceal the air of high birth and high breeding visible in every mo-

tion, who had approached by one path as she was watching for him by another, and now stood at her side.

"So! Master Arthur Montresor," exclaimed the fair damsel, with the little air of sauciness and coquetry which formed so piquant a contrast with her puritanic attire; "So! this is the way you over-sea gallants keep tryste with a simple country maiden! Here have I been for longer than I can tell; and but that I despatched old Jonathan to the hay-folk in the lily-mead with a weighty bottle of double ale, and mentioned something about seeking marsh-mallows to make a salve for Daniel's leg, which he cut half off yester-eve, poor fellow, with his own scythe, whilst he was at one and the same time mowing a heavy swathe and listening to a word in season from Ebenezer Crump, —but for the excuse of seeking these mallows, and the sweet herbs for my father's

pottage, how I could have wandered here none can tell; and to find you absent! One should have thought that the prospect of a dinner would have made you punctual. Take it, can't you?" continued Mabel, as she hastily flung the herbs she spoke of, mallows, sweet-marjoram, marigolds, and thyme, from a basket which lay on the turf, half hidden by a great rose-bush, and handed to her companion with rather more care a large packet wrapped in a napkin, which the loose bundle of mallows had covered most effectually.

"Take the packet and off with it to your hiding place, Master Arthur," resumed she. "You have small cause for thanks, I trow, since the pasty was made of your own deer, that's certain; and 'tis odds but the flask of canary may, in 'bygone days, have inhabited the spacious cellarage of Temple Laleham. Leave kissing my hand, good Arthur, and away! Nay, nay! rest

here a moment, fair cousin," resumed the pretty damsel, whose experience of the "over-sea gallant's" delight in her society had been such as to occasion no small surprise at the ready obedience to the command of leaving her which he testified upon the present occasion. "You may as well stay just for one moment, just to tell me in the first place the cause why you are so silent and so sad, and in the next to have an opportunity of profiting by the perusal of a billet which I have received this very morning from my 'unworthy suitor,' as he calls himself; Aminadab, eldest son and heir of Aminadab Holdfast, the elder, scrivener of Newport."

"A billet from Aminadab, Mabel! and you allow him"—

"Hear the 'story out, beau cousin! A billet in verse. Have patience and you shall hear all. Many a long year back, before the worst of these bad times, when

your dear mother, Lady Montresor, profited of the very distant kindred that subsisted between our houses to show all manner of kindness in my father's absence to his motherless girls, and to me, the youngest, more especially,—for, somehow, my sister Kesiah shrank away from her notice as if anticipating the sad division that was to come:—Well, you may remember in those days when you, a tall youth, and I a small damsel"—

"When I used to call you 'my little wife,' Mabel, and my dear mother smiled at the word. Oh, I remember those days well—too well, perhaps, for a penniless exile!" and the beau cousin sighed.

"Fie, Arthur!" resumed the fair maiden. "Let me get on with my story. Well, in those days there arrived from foreign parts,—sent, by Sir Philip, from Italy, was it not?—a certain instrument which, if laid in an open window, and

swept by the wind, would discourse a music as strange as the means by which it was produced; so wild and sweet, and sad, were the sounds."

"I remember as if it were yesterday my poor mother's delight in those long melancholy cadences, and the fears of the domestics, who, even after the simple machinery was shown, and explained to them, continued to believe it something ominous, if not supernatural. But what can the Æolian harp have to do with Aminadab and his billet?"

"You shall hear. Some fortnight since, after, in one of my half-stolen visits to the Temple Laleham library and the dear pleasaunce, I had discovered you, fair cousin, and your hiding-place, old Judith, discoursing of signs and omens, spoke of the 'wind music' up at the mansion, and Kesiah's curiosity was much excited; so, to prevent a visit, which might have endan-

gered your secret, I ran here the next morning at daybreak, and having after a long search discovered the lost treasure, carried it home forthwith."

"Still, what has that to do with Aminadab?"

"Why, the sweet youth—hast ever seen him, Arthur? He's the very model of a puritan scrivener's only son and heir; plain, precise, stiff, and slow, dropping out his words at the rate of a syllable to a minute, and stalking along the highway at a pace which, at a liberal computation, may average some half mile an hour. He is all over an epitome of puritanism and law. The new suit in which he comes a-courting crackles like parchment, and he makes love in a jargon filched from the mortgages and title deeds which that cunning thief his father has stolen from their right owners. Hath he not your estate at Montresor Vale? Yes! I know he hath.

Well, Arthur! you are going to say over again, what makes all this to the billet? Now the truth is, that this accomplished swain happening to see me one fair morning with a volume of Spenser in my hand, and knowing, from the look of the stanzas that it was verse, and, scandalized at the title,—for of all commerce with any queens, more especially the Faerie Queene, we may safely hold him guiltless,—began vituperating the poets and poesy in such a fashion that I, thinking to be rid of him, forbade him my presence until he had, to make amends for his crime of lêse poesie, produced a copy of verses in my honour."

"And he has written them? And these are they?" quoth Master Arthur Montresor, taking them carelessly from Mabel's fair hand. "Delightfully bad, of course!" added he.

"I crave your pardon, they are on the contrary so good that, although Aminadab

hath engrossed, and in some sort appropriated by engrossing them,—for one can't call those square angular characters hand of writ—I should as soon suspect Holdfast the elder, his honoured father, of the composition as himself. I dare say he has stolen them, as that respectable scrivener would steal an estate. It's the family trick. Read them, Arthur!"

"Addressed to Celia, and signed Amyntor. What will the precisian, his father, say to names so heathenish?"

"TO AN ÆOLIAN HARP.

"ADDRESSED TO THE LADY OF ALL BEAUTY, THE THRICE FAIR CELIA.

"Oh! breezy harp! that, with thy fond complaining,
Hast held my willing ear this whole night long;
Mourning as one might deem, yon moon, slow waning,
Sole listener oft of thy melodious song;

"Sweet harp! if hushed awhile that tuneful sorrow,
Which may not flow unintermitted still,
A lover's prayer one strain less sad might borrow,
Of all thou pourest at thine own sweet will.

"Now, when—her forehead in that pale moon gleaming,
Yon dark-tressed maid beneath the softening hour,
As fain to lose no touch of thy sad streaming,
Leans to the night from forth her latticed bower;

"And the low whispering air, and thy lone ditty,
Around her heart their mingled spells have wove;
Now cease those notes awhile that plain for pity,
And wake thy bolder song, and ask for love.

"AMYNTOR."

* "Stolen of a surety! none of Aminadab's handiwork." And, with a gravity which Mabel was far from expecting, he returned the manuscript.

"But wherefore thus amort, fair cousin? Methinks a love-ditty from yon starched puritan were no ill cause of mirth."

* Not quite stolen, although none of my handiwork. Again Mr. Kenyon's kind gift.

"He may laugh, the rather that, by issuing your commands and accepting his obedience, you are doing your best to further his suit. Think of this, dear Mabel, and put curb and rein on your gay spirit, so that it lead you into no straits when your poor cousin Arthur Montresor is close mewed up, and can no longer pester you with grave counsel, or listen to the prattle which he has loved too well. They have tracked me, Mabel, all day long. I have felt that the spy, Ebenezer, the creature of old Holdfast, is upon my footsteps, although by escaping through the wilderness to the pleasaunce, walled in by those tall yews and hollies, I have for the moment baffled him. And, what is worse, an important missive (for my errand here was not merely to see once again my old ancestral mansion—the home of my forefathers, and to fall in love with the sweet plaything of my early

years, my own little wife), what is far worse, they have, I fear, a missive compromising far higher names than mine—even Ormond himself. Hark! That is Fidele's bark! The spies are at hand."

"Away with thee, dear Arthur! They know not the secret of the library window, which thou canst reach in a moment; nor of the under-ground passage between the house and the grotto, leading from that very room. Fly thither, and leave me to baffle them! Away, dear Arthur! Be quiet, Fidele."

An hour after this dialogue, Mabel Goodwin's round and ringing voice was heard in the grotto, singing to a popular air the first line of Aminadab's love-ditty:

"Oh, breezy harp, that with thy fond complaining."

"Ought not Aminadab to be greatly flattered, Fidele, that I, all alone here, except

thy faithful self, my pretty Fidele, am singing his verses—

'Oh breezy harp!'

I wonder whether anybody hears me!"

And, gathering from her words that she was indeed alone, the young cavalier emerged from the subterranean passage into a dark cave beyond the grotto, from whence he could, if necessary, effect an immediate retreat; the grotto itself being filled with garden-pots, rakes, hoes, and other light tools, which at once formed an excuse for Mabel's visit, and ensured her of warning in case any other person should approach.

"They are gone, Arthur!" cried Mabel triumphantly. "They are both gone, Ebenezer Crump, and old master Holdfast, in his proper person, half a dozen miles on the way to London by this time; and what do you think they have taken with

them to lay before the Protector? Guess! Guess! Aminadab's love-ditty! What think you of that?

'Oh breezy harp, that with thy fond complaining!'

"It's a pity they won't know the tune! There's your letter—*the* letter—mind that you don't drop it again, my good friend; for one can't expect every day to get a copy of verses from that mirror of puritans to send in the stead. How did I manage, do you want to know? Why, Ebenezer had the letter in his hand, girdled round with a bit of red silk, and secured by a seal; and while Master Holdfast was examining the herbs in my basket (luckily you had taken the wine and pasty with you), I begged to look at the packet, pretending to admire the gloss silk and the seal by which it was fastened, and so slipped the letter out, and the verses in. To think how his Highness the Protector

will stare to see an address to the Lady of all Beauty, signed Amyntor! and Master Holdfast, when he shall recognise the hand of writ of Aminadab!

'Oh breezy harp!'

It is really worth the fright to think how delightfully they'll be puzzled. But then to look, Arthur, on your grave face! I do verily believe you would that this missive of yours, with all its treason against the Lord Protector, had gone to Whitehall rather than that song."

"Not so, dearest Mabel! Your quick wit and ready hand have saved my life, and the lives of others far more valuable than mine; but at a risk to yourself when the change of letters is known, as known it must be right speedily, at a risk to your own happiness which I tremble to think of. As for me, I must avail myself of the respite afforded me to prepare the means

of escape. Thou, fairest and dearest"—He checked himself, and continued in a lower tone—"Were it too much to ask of thee to meet me here three nights hence? By that time"—he again paused—"thou wilt not fear to trust thyself here at midnight? Thou wilt not mistrust thy poor cousin? Thou wilt come hither, sweetest Mabel?"

"I must go now, at any rate," said the little damsel, blushing. "My father is ill at ease, and may lack my presence; and, strict though he be, and demure as is my good sister Kesiah, I do firmly believe that he, albeit he calls me rattle-brain and madcap, and chides my vagaries a dozen times a day, doth in reality, and in the bottom of his heart, love me a hundredfold better than he does her. A fair afternoon to you, Master Arthur Montresor. What would you give now to see the

Lord Protector's face when he opens Aminadab's love-ditty!—

'Oh breezy harp!'"

And off the gipsy tripped.

* * * * *

The third night arrived, a true English summer night, the west wind sighing, the moon nearly at full, labouring through drifting clouds, at one moment illumining the silent mansion and the noble park, at another enveloping all around in the deepest shadow. The youth and maiden stood within the ruined grotto; Mabel wrapping herself in her hood and scarf, but shivering nevertheless, partly from the effect of the night-dew, partly from strong emotion, for the cousins (why not use the true word, and call them lovers?) seemed to have changed characters; so earnest and ardent were his pleadings, and her replies so grave and sad.

And yet, perhaps, the transition from extraordinary gaiety to silent depression is more common than it seems. Both extremes of manner and of feeling belong to the same sensitive temperament, the same chameleon-like power of reflecting with equal intensity the brightest sunshine and the darkest shade—much as poor Mabel's pet, Lady Montresor's old peacock, which reflected the noontide light so brilliantly, seeming to throw off showers of gold and coloured gems as it waved its glittering plumage, sat now perched upon the low bough of one of the great linden trees, dusky, dark, and shadowy as Night herself. Of such slight wear is gaiety in this changeful world! Cheerfulness stands the test better. That may be likened to Mabel's other feathered friend, the brooding swan, who sits half hidden by sedges upon her nest in yonder islet, carrying the serene beauty of her snowy plumage into

the gloomiest recesses, "making a sunshine in the shady place," rejoicing in her pure and silvery whiteness "from moonless midnight to matin prime."

But we must return to our lovers.

"All has befallen as I predicted, Mabel. Without exactly knowing that for which it was a substitute, the trick of the love-ditty has been detected, and my presence here so far ascertained as to ensure to-morrow's bringing spies and soldiers, horse and foot, upon the track, to ransack this old place; aided by the local knowledge of the scrivener, Holdfast, eager to rid himself of me, that he may retain unquestioned possession of Montresor Vale, the Northern property of our old house; thrice eager to obtain thy hand for the formal precisian, his son, that he may join these goodly manors to the estates that he already calls his. And thou—"

"Ay, my sentence is already passed. I

must wed Aminadab, or relinquish all hope of pardon from my father." And poor Mabel's tears poured down like rain.

"Wed Aminadab, and embrace misery for thy whole life long! No, sweetest Mabel, that must never be. Dearest, when sent to England by Charles himself, joined in his honouring confidence with that soul of honour, Ormond, and brought by the duties of my mission near to our old home, I fancied that it was only the love of the pleasant scene where I had passed my happy youth that brought me to Temple Laleham and chained me there. Desperate was that self-deception, Mabel. I came here that I might see once again the lovely child, the remembrance of whose graces had steeled my heart against the fair dames of France and Italy. I remained here because I found that lovely child ripened into lovelier woman, and for

the first and only time I felt that I loved. The poor exile dared not woo the rich heiress, and I was silent. But now—oh, Mabel, I cannot leave thee to the destiny with which thou art threatened. Come with me, fairest, dearest! The prospects of the Cavaliers are brightening. A mightier conqueror, Death himself, is wrestling with the great warrior who hath sat so firmly, I had well nigh said so worthily, on the English throne. His son cannot fill that seat. And then—but even if that hope fail, and we be still poor, my Mabel—"

"I think not of riches. They are as dust in the balance. My father, Arthur! my poor, poor father!"

"Will he be happier, think'st thou, to see thee wretched with one whom thou canst not love, and to feel and know that he caused that wretchedness? Come, sweetest, the horses wait."

"He kissed me to-night, and blessed me;—laid his hand upon my head and blessed me, Arthur. My dear, dear father! I cannot leave him, Arthur! And she wrung her hands, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Wilt thou stay to wed Aminadab? We shall return, Mabel, to thy father; return to kneel together for his blessing. And he has still Kesiah. Here is thy palfrey. Place that little foot in my hand. So."

"My father! my poor father!"

And, weeping and exclaiming, she rode away.

* * * * *

A twelvemonth had gone by. The summer sun shone once more on the fair mansion and the rich woods of Temple Laleham. The great Protector was dead, and Richard Cromwell had seemed as well pleased to relinquish the task of sove-

reignty as Charles had been to ascend his ancestral throne. The kingdom after its long unrest was beginning to settle into tranquillity, when, one fine morning, the offending daughter (now, by the death of stout Sir Philip, Lady Montresor) stood humbly before her father's door. Kesiah received her there with the kiss of sisterly affection.

"My father! my dear father?" said poor Mabel.

"He is better, much," replied Kesiah, answering the look rather than the word; —"greatly better in health, and prepared to see you."

The sisters sought his room in silence; and Mabel fell weeping at his feet, and laid her head upon his knee.

"Father! dear father!"

And again she wept.

Softened by illness, by the sight of his favourite child, and above all by her fond-

ness and humility, the old man once again laid his trembling hand upon her head.

Smiling through her tears, she received the benediction in joyful silence.

"Thou hast a son, Mabel. What hast thou called the varlet?"

"John Goodwin, dear father!"

"John Goodwin! poor silly wench! and I would not suffer Kesiah to name him in my presence! John Goodwin! poor wench! poor wench! They tell me, Mabel, that thy husband is as silly as thyself; that he hath been striving in the council against his own rights, and contenting himself with winning back his estate of Montresor Vale from his old enemy. Holdfast hath caused the mansion and lands of Temple Laleham to abide with me. Well! well! thou must dwell there, Mabel, and so must he, and the young knave, thy son."

"Nay, father, is there not room for

you and Kesiah also? room for us all? Let us not be parted again, dear father! never let us be parted again!"

And at Temple Laleham the reconciled family, father and children, Roundhead and Cavalier, dwelt to a good old age, in peace and honour.

THE KING'S WARD.

"I have no joy of this contract to-night."

SHAKSPEARE.

"WHAT!" not a word to thy poor old nurse, or thy faithful bower-women? Not a nod, or a smile, or a kindly look, to show that thou heedest us? Thou that wast wont to be the merriest and kindliest damsel in merry Cumberland, the fair and bold Edith Clifford, the wealthiest maiden north of Trent; about to be wedded, too, to the young Lord Howard, the goodliest and the bravest knight of King Henry's

court, for whose favour the gay dames of the south have been trying and vieing at pageant, at joust, and at tournament, ever since his return from the wars! Men say that, for all that he hath fought against the Soldan, and carried the "blanche-lion," the old banner of his house, foremost among the proud chivalry of France and Italy, he hath rather the mien of a young page than of a stalwart warrior, so smooth and fair is his brow, so graceful his form, so gentle and courteous his bearing. Still amort, Sweeting! mute as a marble image on thy very bridal eve!" And the good old Margaret, seeing her lady still unmoved, paused for very vexation.

"So generous a wooer, too!" exclaimed one of the attendant maidens, glancing at the profusion of rich gifts with which a heavy wain had been laden, and which had arrived that very day at the castle,

under convoy of the good knight's squire, and a score or two of pages and men-at-arms, and which now lay in magnificent profusion about the tapestried chamber, scattered amidst the quaint antique furniture, high-backed ebony chairs, oaken screens, cut into mimic lace-work; marble slabs, resting on gilded griffins, or some such picturesque monsters of heraldry; and huge cabinets, composed of the rarest woods, an entire history, profane or sacred, carved upon the doors, and surmounted with spires and pinnacles, like the decorated shrine of a Gothic cathedral; the whole scene, lighted up by the bright beams of the evening sun, coloured into a thousand vivid hues, as they glanced through the storied panes of the oriel window. A scene more bright, or more gorgeous, than that stately lady's bower, tenanted, as it was, by woman in her fairest forms, by venerable age and

blooming youth, could hardly be found in merry England. Yet there sat the youthful lady of the castle, in the midst of all this costly beauty, languid and listless, pale and motionless as a statue.

"So generous a wooer, too!" exclaimed Mistress Bridget, the pretty bright-eyed brunette, the Lady Edith's principal bower-woman, who, being reckoned the best adjuster of a head-tire, and the most skilful professor of all arts of the loom and the needle, whether in white-seam, cut work, tapestry, or broidery, of any maiden in the north country, was, more especially, alive to the rarity and richness of Lord Howard's gifts.

"So generous a wooer, too! only look at these carpets from Persia! 'Tis a marvel how folk can have the heart to put foot on such bright flowers; they seem as if they were growing! And these velvets from Genoa; were ever such colours seen?

And the silken stuffs from Padua, that stand on end with their own richness; what kirtles and mantles they will make! And the gloves of Cales, that cause the chamber to smell like a garden full of spice, cloves, and jessamine! And these veils from the Low Countries, as fine as a spider's web! And the cloth of gold, and the cloth of silver,—where did Master Eustace say they came from, Dame Margaret? And this golden vessel for perfumes, which looks like a basket all over-run with grapes and ivy?"

"That was wrought by a cunning goldsmith of Florence," responded old Margaret, "whose skill is so surpassing, that, albeit he employs chiefly the precious metals, the workmanship is of more value than the materials. This silver tray, with the delicate trellis-work, wreathed with lilies and roses round the edge, and the story of Diana and Ac — Ac — fie on my old brains! I shall forget my own name

soon! — Diana and — he that was turned into a stag— "

"Actæon!" whispered Alice, the fairest and most youthful of the Lady Edith's attendants, gently and unostentatiously supplying the good dame's failure of memory, without looking up from her work.

"Ay, Actæon! I thank thee, Alice. Thy wits are younger than mine by fifty good years, or more. This silver salver, with the light delicate edge, that seems like the work of the fairies, and the story of Diana and Actæon inside, is by the same hand."

"And then the caskets of precious stones!" pursued the enthusiastic waiting damsel, warming at the contemplation of the finery. "The brooches and bracelets! The coronets and the carkanets! Why, yonder wreath of emeralds and amethysts, which lies on the table underneath the great Venetian glass—to think of my lady

never having had the curiosity to look into *that!*" (and Mistress Bridget took a self-satisfied peep at her own pretty figure, as it was reflected on the broad clear surface of the rare and costly mirror), "that single wreath, which she hath never vouchsafed to glance upon: and the ropes of pearls which I laid upon her lap, and which she hath let drop upon the floor; do pick them up, Alice!—I verily believe the foolish wench careth as little for these precious adornments as the Lady Edith herself! That one wreath, and those strings of pearls be worth an earl's ransom."

At this moment the sound of a harp was heard, and the voice of the minstrel arose from beneath the casement:—

"Waken to pleasure
Lady sweet!
Lo! an empire's treasure
Is spread at thy feet:
Here be shawls of Cashmere fine;
Rubies from Bulcharia's mine;

The pear-shaped pearls of Ormuz' bay;
And gold, 'mid Yemen's sands that lay.
Waken to pleasure,
Lady sweet!
Love, and Love's treasure,
Be spread at thy feet."

The air was smooth and flowing, and the voice that of Robert Fitz-Stephen, one of the most approved of the courtly minstrels: but still the Lady Edith sat pale and motionless, as though the tide of melody had glided unfelt over her senses, producing no more impression than the waters of the lake upon the plumage of the cygnet.

Dame Margaret sighed deeply, and Bridget giving her head a provoked impatient jerk, resumed her embroidery with such furious rapidity, that she broke her silk half-a-dozen times in the course of a minute, and well nigh spoiled the carnation upon which she was engaged, and which she had intended to outvie the na-

tural blossom in Father Francis's flower-border. Young Alice, drawing her tapestry-frame nearer to them, and further from Lady Edith, and speaking in a low tone, even lower than her own soft and gentle natural voice, resumed the conversation.

"For my own part, good Bridget (call me foolish an' thou wilt), I do *not* wonder at our sweet lady's sadness. Think what a piteous thing it is to be an orphan; think but of that great grief! And then to be a great heiress to boot, left in the king's ward and dragged from her own dear home in her old dear north countrie, to this fine grand castle (which, albeit her own also in right of her lady mother, seems too strange and too grand for happiness), and all for the purpose of being wedded to this young lord, with his costly glittering gifts, who had never vouchsafed to come near her

until now, on the very eve of the bridal, when it hath pleased him to give notice of his approach. Holy St. Agatha defend me from such a wooer! A wooer, whose actions shew, as plainly as words could tell, that he seeketh Lady Edith's broad lands, and careth as little for the Lady Edith's warm heart as I do for a withered rose-leaf. I'll tell thee what, Bridget, I never look to see such happy days again, as when we dwelt in our old dear home, amongst the pleasant vales and breezy mountains of Cumberland. There was health and freedom in the very air. Dost thou not remember the day when old Geoffrey the falconer had lamed himself among the rocks, and the youth Albert, the travelling minstrel, took charge of the hawks, and waited on my lady, as if he had been trained to the sport all his life long! Hast thou forgot how she stood by

the lake, with her favourite merlin on her wrist, and her white greyhound Lilly-bell at her side, looking like the very goddess of the chase, so full of life, and spirit, and cheeriness? And that bright evening, when she led the dance at the Maypole? Well-a-day, poor lady! 'tis a woful change!"

It was remarkable that the Lady Edith's attention, which neither the louder speech of her elder attendants, nor the ringing tones of the harper, had been able to command, was arrested at once by the soft low voice of Alice. The womanly sympathy sank soothingly into the woman's heart, just as the gentle rain from heaven penetrates the parched hill-side, from whose arid surface the sharp and arrowy hail rebounds without impression. The drooping mistress listened in mournful silence, whilst her faithful maiden, unconscious that she had attracted her notice, pursued,

in still lower accents, the train of thought which her own fond recollections of the freedom and happiness which they had tasted among their native mountains had awakened in her mind.

"Poor Albert, too! the wandering minstrel, who came to the castle gate to crave lodging for one night, and sojourned with us for three long months; and then, when he had wrought himself up to go,—and, verily, it was a parting like that of the spirit and the flesh, when he left our old walls,—returned again and again, and finally fixed himself in the fisherman's cottage, where the mountain streamlet, after meandering along the meadow, falls into the lake. Poor Albert! I warrant me he taketh good care of Lily-bell and my lady's merlin, whereof he craved the charge from old Geoffrey. I marvel whether my lady knoweth that her pretty Lily-bell and her favourite falcon be in

hands that will tend them so heedfully, for her dear sake! To my fancy, Bridget, that poor youth, albeit so fearful and so ashamed in her presence, worshipped the very ground that she trod upon. I have seen him kiss Lily-bell's glossy head, after her hand had patted it, reverently and devotedly, as though it had been a holy relique in the great minster at Durham."

Again the full and ringing chords of the harp—but, this time, to an old border air, well known to the Northern maidens—rose from beneath the casement. The voice, too, was different from that of the courtly minstrel—deeper, manlier, pouring forth the spirit of the words, as they gushed spontaneously, as it seemed, from his lips, as though, in his case, song were but the medium of feeling, and the poet's fancy and the musician's skill were merged

in the impassionate grief of the despairing lover. So the strain rang:—

"High o'er the baron's castle tall,
Rich banners float with heavy fall;
And light and song, in mingling tide,
Pour forth, to hail the lovely bride.
Yet, lady, still the birchen tree
Waves o'er the cottage on the lea;
The babbling stream runs bright and fair,—
The love-star of the West shines there."

"Ha!" exclaimed old Margaret;" that ditty hath aroused my lady. See how she listens."

"'Tis the rondelay which she herself was wont to sing," observed Bridget; "but the words are different."

"Peace! peace!" cried the Lady Edith, checking, with some impatience, the prattle of her attendants, and leaning against the casement which she had flung open, as the deep and earnest voice of the minstrel

again resounded through the apartment. "Be silent, I pray ye!"

"Mailed wardens pace o'er keep and tower;
Gay maidens deck the lady's bower;
Page, squire, and knight, a princely train,
Wait duteous to her bridle rein.
Yet in that cot the milk-white hound,
The favourite falcon, still are found;
And one more fond, more true than they,
Born to adore and to obey."

"Alack! alack!" sighed the tender-hearted Alice. "Well-a-day, poor youth! I ever deemed that his strange fondness for Lily-bell—albeit as pretty and playful a creature as ever gambolled on the green-sward, and as swift of foot as ever followed hare over the mountains—had a deeper source than love of the good hound. Well-a-day, poor Albert! He was a goodly youth!

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed the Lady Edith, as the symphony finished, and the

voice, again mingled with the chords of the harp, struck falteringly and unsteadily now, as though the hand trembled, and the heart waxed faint.

"The coronet of jewels rare
Shines proudly o'er her face so fair;
And titles high and higher name
Lord Howard's lovely bride may claim.
And yet the wreath of hawthorn bough
Once lightlier pressed that snowy brow;
And hearts that wither now were gay,
When she was but the Queen of May."

"Alas! alas! my lady, my dear sweet lady!" murmured Alice to herself, as poor Edith, after lingering at the window long enough to ascertain that the harp was silent, and the harper gone, sank into a seat with a sigh and a look of desolation that proved more plainly than words, the truth of the last lines of the minstrel's lay.

"Alas! alas! dear lady!" exclaimed she in a louder tone, as the sudden burst of

startling noises, the warlike blasts of trump and cornet, the jarring dissonant sound caused by raising the heavy portcullis, and lowering the massive drawbridge, and the echoing tramp of barbed steeds and mailed horsemen in the courts of the castle, showed that the expected bridegroom had at length arrived.

Edith wrung her hands in desperation.

"This knight I cannot, and I will not see. Go to him, Margaret; say that I am sick—that I am dying. The blessed saints can bear witness that thou wilt say but the truth in so telling him. Sick at heart am I, sick to the death! Oh! that I had died before this wretched hour!" And poor Edith burst into an agony of tears, that shook her very frame.

"Why goest thou not, Margaret?" inquired she, a few moments after, when, exhausted by its own violence, her grief had become more tranquil. "Why dost thou

not carry my message to the Lord Howard? Why dally thus, old dame? Bridget, go thou! They stand about me as though I were an ignorant child, that knew not what she said! Do my bidding on the instant, Bridget: thou wert best!"

"Nay, good my lady, but our gracious lord the king—"

"Tell me not of kings, maiden! I'll to sanctuary. I'll fly this very night to my aunt, the prioress of St. Mary's. The church knoweth well how to protect her votaries. Woe is me! that, for being born a rich heir, I must be shut from the free breath of heaven, the living waters, and the flowery vales, in the dark and gloomy cloister! To change the locks that float upon the breeze for the dismal veil! To waste my youth in the cold and narrow convent cell—a living tomb! Oh! it is a sad and a weary lot. But better so, than to plight my troth to one

whom I have never seen, and can never love! to give my hand to one man, whilst my heart abideth with another."

"Lady!" cried Margaret; "do my senses play me false? Or is it Edith Clifford that speaketh thus of a low-born churl?"

"A low-born churl!" responded Edith. "There is a regality of mind and of spirit about that youth, which needeth neither wealth nor lineage to even him with the greatest—the inborn nobility of virtue and of genius! Never till now knew I that he loved me; and now——. Hasten to this lord, Alice; and see that he cometh not hither. Wherefore lingerest thou, maiden?" inquired Edith, of the pitying damsel who staid her steps with an exclamation of surprise, as the door of the chamber was gently opened. "Tell the Lord Howard the very truth; men say that he is good and wise—too wise,

too good, to seek his own happiness at the expense of a poor maiden's misery. Tell him the whole truth, Alice. Spare thy mistress that shame. Say that I love him not; say that I love——"

"Nay, sweetest lady, from thine own dear lips must come that sweet confession," said a voice at her side, and, turning to the well-known accents, Edith saw, at her feet, him, who having won her heart as the wandering minstrel, the humble falconer, claimed her hand as the rich and high-born Philip Howard, the favourite of the king.

"A cry of joy burst from the astonished waiting-women, and was echoed by the pretty greyhound Lily-bell, who had followed the Lord Howard into the room, and now stood trembling with ecstacy before her fair mistress, resting her head in her lap, and looking up into her face with eyes beaming with affectionate gladness—eyes that literally glowed with delight.

Never was happiness more perfect than that of the betrothed maiden, on this so dreaded bridal eve. And heartily did her faithful attendants sympathize in her happiness; only Bridget found it impossible to comprehend why, in the hour of hope and joy, as in that of fear and sorrow, her dearly beloved finery should be neglected.

"To think," quoth the provoked bower-woman, "that now that all these marvels have come about, and that the Lord Howard turns out to be none other than the youth Albert, my lady will not vouchsafe to tell me whether her kirtle shall be of cloth of gold or cloth of silver; or whether she will don the coronet of rubies or the emerald wreath! Well-a-day!" quoth Bridget, "this love! this love!"

THE GLEANER.

"They have all been touched, and found base metal."

SHAKSPEARE.

"So! This is my return to my native village! This my reception from relatives who owe me so much!" Thus thought, rather than said, a poor-looking old man, as he stood leaning over the gate of a newly-cleared wheat-field, in the bright, bustling, busy harvest time. "One," exclaimed he, as his musings took a tone of passion which broke unconsciously into words: "One—yonder portly landlady,

forsooth, sitting in her bar, as she is pleased to call it—her bar, quotha! In my young days it was the little boarded parlour opening from the tap-room. A bar in the old Red Lion! What shall we hear of next? One, bedecked and bedizened, with her gown like a rainbow, her fringed apron, and her cap stuck out with flowers, sitting in her bar, if that be its style and title, amongst her glasses and punch-bowls, with a bell upon her table, and a net of lemons dangling above her head; she, Miss Collins, as she calls herself—she used to answer to the name of Jenny Collins twenty years agone—refused point-blank to acknowledge me! denied to my face that she had ever seen me! called me a cheat and an impostor! wondered at my impudence in attempting to pass myself for her dear uncle Michael Norris! threatened me with the stocks and the round-house, the justice and the jail! Precious

minx! She whom I rescued from drudgery and starvation, from living half shop-woman, half maid, with the stingy, termagant, clear-starcher, in Belford Marsh! whom I set up in that very Red Lion!—perched upon her throne, the arm-chair, in the bar!—purchased the lease, the furniture, the goodwill! paid her first year's rent! stocked her cellars! clapped a hundred-pound bank-note into her hand! And now that I come home, old and lame, sick and ragged, she reviles me as a vagabond and an impostor, and tells me to be thankful to her compassion and tenderheartedness that she does not send for the constable to carry me to jail! Liar that she is! base, ungrateful, perjured liar! for she knew me. I saw that she knew me; ay, as well as I knew her. She would be glad to be no more altered in the years that have changed her from a slim girl of twenty-five to a bloated woman of five-and-

forty, than I, in those same years, with all my griefs!

"Then her brother—faugh! It maddens one to think of their baseness!—her brother, whom I educated and apprenticed, finding him money afterwards to put him into partnership with old Jones the thriving linen-draper. He, indeed, did not pretend to deny that I might be his uncle:—but, grant that I were, what claim had I upon his charity more than any other starving wretch? What was I to him? He pitied me, Heaven knew! but what could I expect from him? Oh, the smooth-speaking, soft-spoken knave! with his pity and his charity! Hypocrite in look and word! His tone was as gentle as if he had been bidding me welcome to bed and board for my whole life long. What a fawning parasite that would have been now, if I had accosted him like a rich man! Well, there is some virtue in these rags, since

they teach false tongues to speak truth. Then came my cousin Anthony, whose daughter I portioned, whose runaway son I clothed and sent to sea. And this Anthony is now a great mealman—a rich miser who could buy up half the county. What said he? Why he was poor himself—the scoundrel!—nobody knew how poor, and had been forced to make a rule to give nothing to beggars; ay, he called me a beggar! I might go to the Union, he said; that was the fittest place for me. To the Union! the workhouse! Oh, the precious rascal! The son of my father's brother, brought up in my father's house—worth a hundred thousand pounds, and would have sent me to the workhouse—me, his only living kinsman! Oh, this world! this world! Then—for I was resolved to try them all—I sought out my old schoolfellow Nicholas Hume, the spendthrift, whom I bailed in my young days,

when little richer than himself, and saved from prison by paying his debts. What was his gratitude? Why he, forsooth, had never heard my name. Michael Norris! Who was Michael Norris? Oh, they knew me well enough twenty years ago, when I returned from the West Indies a rich man, husband of a wealthy Creole, master of flourishing plantations, to visit my early haunts, help my poor relations—I found them all in distress some way or other — and shake hands with my old friends. Nobody had forgotten me *then.* But now that I come back a ragged cripple, houseless and friendless"—And the old man paused, and lifted his wretched hat from his thin grey hairs, and passed his tattered handkerchief over his furrowed brow, with an air which proved that he was as much oppressed by mental suffering, by indignation, and disappointment, as by the sultry heat of an August noon.

"There are none left now," thought old Michael to himself, as, exhausted by his vehemence, he sank into a milder mood—"none left for me to apply to now, except the three orphan children of my poor nephew William Leslie, the cousin of these hard-hearted Collinses, and their mother; and they, I fear, are themselves in great want and great trouble. He, lately dead, after a series of undeserved misfortunes and a long and wasting illness; and she, working as hard as ever woman did work to keep herself and her family out of the workhouse—that Union to whose comforts my precious cousin Anthony so tenderly consigns me. Poor things! They may well deny any knowledge of me! for they never saw me; and I have had a good sample of the slight impression that benefits conferred leave behind them! William was only eighteen when I left England and returned to Jamaica after my last

visit. A fine, frank-hearted lad he was! I remember wishing to take him with me. But my poor sister would not part with him. She had married again after the death of her first husband, William's father, and a wretched match she made; for this second husband proved to be an habitual drunkard, always half mad when intoxicated, who broke out at last into desperate frenzy, and, but for my interposition, would have murdered the poor boy. I seem to see the struggle now," thought the old man, closing his eyes; "he flinging himself upon William with a table-knife, and I rushing between them just soon enough to receive the blade in my arm. I bear the mark of the wound still. The madman was sent to an asylum, and there soon died. And my poor sister, well off for her station, could not part from this only son. He was a fine lad was William, spirited and generous; and when she also

died, he was already attached to the girl whom he afterwards married. I helped them, too, for I loved the boy; I helped on that match, for it was one of sincere affection, and they were in a way to earn a handsome competence: there must have been some imprudence, or great ill luck, to have reduced them to such poverty." So ran the train of the old cripple's reverie. "I never suspected it; he never wrote to me; and I, engaged in my own affairs, and with children then of my own—— Well, I will see them, however. They are in this field gleaning. So said their neighbour. Yes! This is the field! There they are. I'll see them," thought Michael Norris, "though it is probable that they too will know nothing of me." And, opening the gate, the old man limped slowly across the furrows, and began gathering the scattered ears of corn in his withered hand.

We have said *the field*, although, after passing the gate which admitted him between the two high hedges that bounded it on the northern side, the wide expanse from which the wheat had just been carried assumed the appearance rather of a large open ridge of arable land, bordered by the high road, and terminated by a distant village, than of the small wooded enclosures so common in the midland counties. A pretty scene it was, as it lay before him, bathed in the sunshine; and a lovely group was that to which his attention was immediately directed. A pale young woman, whose regular and beautiful features received additional interest from her close widow's cap, stood before him, holding a fine infant in her arms; a very pretty girl of twelve or thirteen was flourishing a tuft of wheat-ears before the baby's eyes, smiling herself at the smile she excited, while her little brother clung to the

mother's petticoat in momentary fear of two high-fed dogs attending a gentleman and lady riding slowly along the road.

The poor cripple drew back and sat down under a clump of maple and hawthorn, gay with the purple wild veitch, the white bind-weed, and the pretty clematis, known by the still prettier name of "the traveller's joy;" whilst the riding-party called off their dogs, spoke graciously to the child and his mother, and passed slowly out of sight. As they left her, Mrs. Leslie, for she it was, approached the old man, to replace her infant in his cradle, niched under the fragrant shade of some overhanging hazel-stems just beside his rude seat. Struck by the evidence of poverty, sickness, and sorrow afforded by his tattered apparel and his wrinkled yet venerable countenance, she took up a pitcher which stood by the cradle, and, with the kindness which the very poor so

often show to each other, and a remark upon the heat of the day, offered him a small cupful of the milk which formed the contents of the jug. He took it with a trembling hand, and thanked her with an emotion which our readers will comprehend, but which at once surprised and interested its object.

"Your name is Leslie?" asked he, as, after returning the cup with thanks and blessings, he made room for her beside him on the thymy bank.

"Your name is Leslie?"

"Margaret Leslie. It is so."

"The wife of William Leslie?"

"His widow. Ah, me! his widow!" replied she, with a sigh. "The widowed mother of those children. Michael," added she, as the boy came near them, "take some milk yourself, and carry a cupful to your sister, and bring what wheat-ears she and you have gathered to my little heap."

"Michael?" echoed the old man, "your husband's name was William! How came you to call his son Michael? But the name belongs to your family perhaps;—your father, or some favourite brother?"

"No," replied the widow, "it was for a different reason. A very dear kinsman of my husband's bore that name, and in token of love and gratitude to him, and in fulfilment of an old promise, so our only son was christened."

"I remember," muttered the cripple to himself, "I remember William said that his first boy should bear my name, and I think he wrote to that effect after the child was born; but the letter must have arrived at that time of misery." Then rousing himself, and turning to the gentle creature, whom a feeling of unusual interest still detained at his side, he added aloud, "I do remember now that William Leslie had an uncle called Michael Norris, but what peculiar cause of gratitude——"

"What cause!" interrupted Mrs. Leslie; "a thousand causes: from a mere infant, when I have heard my husband say that he gave him the first shilling he ever possessed,—that kind uncle, absent or present, was his good genius. He insisted upon his being sent to Belford School; paid himself for masters, whom his guardians thought superfluous; rescued him from the frantic frenzy of his stepfather; saved his life at the utmost peril of his own, from the furious assaults of that wretched madman; placed him in the paper-mill, which, but for the rash speculations of his partner, would have been not merely a comfortable income for himself, but an affluent provision for his family; and, last and dearest kindness, when William, with his characteristic generosity, loved a poor girl, the portionless orphan of a naval officer, when interested connexions and officious friends all opposed the union,

did not he, from across the wide ocean, send himself not merely his approbation of the destined marriage, but a portion for the destitute bride? I never saw him," continued Mrs. Leslie, in a lower tone than that which had been dictated by her enthusiastic recollection of her benefactor's goodness; "but night and morning I have prayed for him, and night and morning do my poor children join in those prayers; and my dear husband, amongst his latest words——"

"Did he pray for the uncle who seemed to have forgotten him?" asked the old man, his voice half-stifled with emotion. "Look, Margaret," added he, stripping up his sleeve and showing a deep scar extending diagonally across his left arm; "this scar was received from the knife with which his furious and frantic stepfather was pursuing William Leslie. I am Michael Norris. You will not disdain to acknowledge the

cripple who comes to your door hungry and ragged. Here, too," said he, taking from his pocket a bundle of papers, " are characters that you well know."

Tearfully yet joyfully the warm-hearted and grateful Margaret returned the embraces of her venerable kinsman, presented her three children to him one by one, and replied to his questions as to their change of circumstances.

It needed few words to tell the story. Nothing is more rapid than a descent. The rolling of a stone down a hill is a true type of falling fortune. Taking advantage of a long illness with which William Leslie was afflicted, his partner engaged in desperate speculations. They failed. The rash speculator absconded, and William remained, a bankrupt without a friend or resource. Honest to the last, his wife resigned her small settlement to satisfy the creditors. His debts being paid, he had tried every means of living, and whilst

he retained his health had supported his family by the most persevering industry; but a fever, occasioned by over exertion, had come on; his constitution, impaired by anxiety and labour, had been unable to resist the attack, and since that period the wife who had been the faithful partner of his cares and his toils, had at least so far succeeded as to maintain her children without the assistance of charity whether public or private.

"Why not have written to me when this bankruptcy took place?" inquired the uncle.

"Alas, dear sir! we had before heard of that terrible hurricane, in which"——

"In which," said the old man, filling up with stern composure the sudden pause that from a mixture of delicacy and sympathy had arrested Margaret Leslie's words —"in which the plantation where I resided was laid waste, my house levelled with the ground, and my wife with four

hopeful children in the ruins! In striving to rescue them, this thigh,"—striking the withered limb with a hazel-twig—"this thigh was broken. I owe my preservation to the gratitude of an emancipated negro; but for months, for years, all life, all nature was a blank before me! I have sometimes wondered how I could have survived such a blow! For what purpose I was spared! The doubt was sinful, and finds its rebuke, its thrice merciful rebuke, in this blissful hour. You heard then of my losses, dear Margaret? Poor William heard of them?"

"We were sure that something must have gone amiss, from receiving no reply to the letter which announced the birth of our boy, and claimed your promise of standing godfather at his christening. William did not like to write again upon such an occasion; it would have seemed like encroaching upon your too generous spirit. But when the news of that awful

hurricane arrived, and Nicholas Hume and the Collinses made inquiries in London and ascertained that your plantation had indeed been amongst those laid waste,—then your silence was too well explained! I heard this sad news first; for it arrived during the dreadful illness which preceded my husband's bankruptcy. And when he regained so much breathing-time after his own misfortunes as to ask news of you, no tidings could be obtained; all trace of you seemed lost. Oh that he had lived to see this day! HIS will be done! But oh that my poor husband had but lived to see once more the kinsman he loved so well!"

The old man pressed her hand in speechless emotion, and Margaret, smiling through hers, went on:—

"You must live with us, dear uncle, and we shall wait upon you and work for you, and be happy together—as happy as we can be without *him*—after all. My Annie

is a good girl—oh, such a good girl! and pretty, is she not dear uncle?—and poor Michael, your namesake, is a boy of a thousand. We have had much to be thankful for. Farmer Rogers, the overseer, whose books my husband kept (little Michael keeps them now, as well the farmer says as his father did), supplies us with milk twice a-day. Mrs. Lascelles, the rector's wife, employs Annie and me constantly in needlework for her large family; and if we can but keep our pretty cottage —if we can but keep that cottage at whose porch poor William planted the honeysuckle and the China rose, and the vine which now half covers the thatch—that cottage where we worked and wept together, and where he died the death of the righteous—if we can but live together there, within sight of the turf that covers his dear remains, I should ask for nothing better on this side the grave."

The widow's tears flowed afresh, and once again the old man pressed her hand.

"Is there any doubt of your retaining this beloved habitation, dear Margaret? And does my coming cause that doubt?"

"Oh no! no! dear uncle, not in the slightest degree. The cause of doubt is, that we have no lease, and that Miss Collins, as she calls herself, poor William's cousin, wants it for some purpose or other; people say with some view of marrying. But this is idle talk,—village gossip. What is certain is, that she wishes to take it, and is willing to give two pounds a-year more rent than I now give or can afford to give. If our old landlord, Mr. Godfrey, had stayed, he and Lady Elizabeth had promised that I should remain; but the Hall, and the village, and the whole estate are sold, and the new lord of the manor is coming this evening. Hark! you may hear the bells

ringing even now. Mr. Godfrey and Lady Elizabeth intend staying a few days at the rectory: you saw them ride by with their dogs: they have promised to speak in my favour to the new landlord; they mentioned it even now, and the good rector and his excellent lady will second my petition: still—"

"Be of good cheer, Margaret! Even if you should leave your pretty cottage, I would wager something—" The old man checked himself, and resumed in an indifferent tone, "Who is the new lord of the manor? What is his name?

"The property was purchased by a Mr. Price; but he is understood to be an agent, and I have not heard the name of the real proprietor, who is said to be an elderly gentleman, and so rich that he will hardly be tempted to turn an old tenant from her cottage for so trifling an addition of rent. Nevertheless—"

"Once again, Margaret, be of good heart!" reiterated her uncle.

"The tenants are to meet him in the avenue: the farmers and their sons on horseback; the cottagers, women, and children, on foot. Ought I to join them? I have no shame in honest labour, but I do shrink from meeting the scorn of those purse-proud kindred who—" and poor Margaret's tears fell fast. Ought I to be there, dear uncle? I will go or stay as you direct."

"Go, Margaret! Go, and fear nothing. Gather up your treasures: the jug, whose generous draught was the sweetest I ever quaffed; the wheat-ears; and the cradle with its crowing babe,—blessings on its dear face! Go boldly. I will not shame you by these unseemly rags; but will rest awhile under the friendly shade of the hazel, while you return home and prepare for the procession. Be sure that you

fail not. We shall meet again soon, dear ones. For the present, farewell."

And something there was about the old man, ragged, sick, and lame as he was, that Margaret found it impossible to disobey. So, heartened up, she knew not why (for many have felt, without being able to give the feeling its true name, the mingled power of sympathy and appreciation to comfort and to cheer), she called about her her blooming children and departed; Annie and herself bearing the cradle between them, and the boy laden with the gleanings of the day.

The setting sun gleamed brightly between the noble elms that formed the beautiful avenue to Corston Hall, gilding the rugged branches and turning into pendent emeralds the leaves of the branches which met across the wide carriage-road; met and interleaved in a lengthened archway that might well have suggested the

rich intricacies of a cathedral aisle in the proudest days of Gothic architecture. The village bells pealed amain, horses pranced, flags waved, the children of the parish-schools strewed the gaudy flowers of early autumn; and as the carriage of the new lord of the manor rolled between the ivied lodges to the grey old Hall, a quaint irregular structure of Elizabeth's or James's days, with a tame peacock sunning himself on the stone balustrade, a large old English spaniel basking on the steps, and the tenants in their holiday apparel grouped around the porch, an artist, whether painter or poet, might have envied the accident which produced an arrangement so felicitously picturesque.

Something of this feeling, however, unperceived or unguessed by herself, mingled with the natural emotions of curiosity and interest in our friend Margaret's bosom, as, standing humbly apart

between her two elder children, with her infant in her arms, under a large sycamore, she gazed around upon the scene, and perceived, gaily adorned in the extreme of the country fashion, the rival candidate for her beloved cottage—the buxom landlady of the Red Lion, surrounded by the unfriendly kindred of her late husband. Neither Margaret nor her William had ever applied for assistance to these people; and yet she knew instinctively that some from pride and some from shame felt the silent reproach of her unassisted poverty and her blameless life—that all wished her absence, and would contribute as far as in them lay to turn her from her home; and in spite of the encouraging influence of her lately-known kinsman's cheering forebodings, her heart sank within her as the door of the carriage was thrown open. An elderly gentleman, very neatly dressed, but pallid, emaciated, and lame, was

assisted by his servants up the two low steps that led to the porch. Having ascended them with some difficulty, he turned round, took off his hat, bowed with a gracious smile to the assembly, and then paused, as if in search of some one whom he expected to see.

The effect of this apparition was a start of surprise and horror from the portly landlady, seldom equalled on the stage or off; her brother the haberdasher, who had just flourished his hat preparatory to leading the general cheer, let it fall in dismay, looking the curses which his habitual hypocrisy scarce repressed; cousin Anthony, the rich miserable miser, smothered a groan; and Nicholas Hume, in spite of his consummate impudence, fairly stole away.

What in the meanwhile did our friends in their humble nook under the sycamore? Little Michael danced for joy; Annie clapped her hands; and poor Margaret, for the

twentieth time during the last six hours, burst into tears—tears, this time, however, of unmingled joy.

"Mrs. Leslie! Margaret! my dear niece!" cried Michael, or, as we may now call him, Mr. Norris, advancing to meet her; "to you alone of all my relations now living do I owe any account of my motives for coming amongst you as I have done to-day. With the rest of my kindred I have done for ever. But I also owe some explanation to my tenants and future neighbours. You all know that I left England about fifty years ago, a poor and friendless lad. I returned nearly thirty years afterwards, with riches honestly obtained, the happy husband of a wealthy and excellent woman, and the father of four hopeful children. I came to Corston; found my relations, some indigent, some comfortably situated; did what good I could amongst them; and went back to Jamaica, with

the view at some future day of placing my sons at the head of my plantations in that island, and coming home to die in my native village. A hurricane passed over the estate where I lived, destroying my dwelling, my wife, my children, and almost myself. For many years I was dead to the world; but care had been taken of the large property that remained to me, and, when, by God's mercy, I was restored to health, mental and bodily, I found myself rich indeed, so far as money was concerned—richer than ever; but in the blessed charities of life most poor—a childless, desolate, bereaved old man. I knew that a report had gone abroad that I was ruined by the hurricane, and I resolved to prove the relations I had left in England, by coming amongst them in seeming poverty. I have done so, and the experiment has answered well. And now, my dearest niece, I need not tell you that the cottage

is yours; but for the second time to-day I throw myself upon your charity. You will not abandon me because I happen to be rich? You will never have the heart to do so? You remember your promise that we should live together; and come with those dear children to brighten and gladden the old Hall."

THE BARON'S DAUGHTER.

"The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice."

SHAKSPEARE

"WHEREFORE so sad and silent, Helen mine?" was the question of the fair Agnes Montresor to her fairer cousin, the daughter and heir of the Lord Scrope, as followed by a goodly retinue of waiting gentlewomen, grooms, and pages, they threaded, with a solemn dignity that might have done honour to elder dames,

the narrow winding woodland path that divided the glassy mere, at the side of which they had been flying their falcons, from the ample park, dotted with noble groups of venerable oaks, bathed in the sunshine that surrounded the baron's stately mansion of Beau-Repaire.

"What hath troubled thee, Helen, that thou sittest on thy jennet as mute as the merlin on thy wrist? Art thou wroth with thyself for chiding the young Lord Devereux from thy bridle rein? or —alack that a knight so lately from the gay court of France should know so little how to construe a fair maiden's wishes when her words say one thing and her looks another! —is that same Arthur Devereux fallen into thy disgrace for too readily obeying thy behests? What aileth thee, sweet cousin, thou the heir of those broad lands; for whose fair grace the champion strives in the lists, and the min-

strel at the board; thou to hang drooping over thy saddle bow, as sad as a turtle dove that hath lost her mate—whilst I, thy poor kinswoman, and thy very bower-maidens, Margaret and Cicely, are as blithe as so many larks! Fie on thee sweet cousin! This wayward humour is flat treason against thy happier destiny! Betrothed too to the man whom thou best lovest! at the king's command! and with thy lord and father's approval!"

"Why, there it is!" responded the fair Helen, suddenly reining in her palfrey, and turning towards her cousin with an air of desolation that contrasted strongly with the sprighty demeanour of her young kinswoman: "Have I not cause enow for melancholy, think'st thou, to be bestowed by the king's behest upon the lord Devereux, so that love me, or love me not, he must needs espouse me? And to be the daughter and heir of a wealthy baron, into

whose ear all men seem bounden to pour false feignings! oh! that I were as little in debt to fortune as thou art, Agnes, that I might for once hear words of truth!"

And the pretty spoilt child sighed; and it may be—for I suspect that the sad rogue called Human Nature played beauties and heiresses the same tricks in the days of bluff king Hal as in the reign of our sovereign lady Victoria—it may be that she really thought she should prefer truth to flattery, even from the lips of the Lord Devereux.

Her cousin smiled with some archness. Perhaps she perceived, or thought she perceived, that what the fair heiress really wanted was praise in a newer and more piquant form.

"Nay, an thy melancholy have no deeper root than a lover's courtesy, sweet Coz, I'll gage my velvet hood against thy broidered wimple that I find thee a medicine

Hearken, Helen!—This brisk October wind is gathering to a tempest. The golden leaves of this close beechen alley are falling about our ears; and the clouds gathering above our heads as though the very blessed skies were part and parcel of our council. The rain that 'monisheth us to seek shelter will drive the falconers from their sport by the mere. Put thy steed to his full pace, dearest! We must win afore these gallants to the great hall of Beau-Repaire; and there thou must hide thee behind the warder's great carved chair.—No! No!—Sit thee down there, as though overwrought by the sport and the riding, and fall asleep; that were the cunninger device; and then when the Lord Devereux espyeth his lady and mistress, as he and my varlet, Philip Poynings, pass through with their hawks, mark an he speak not as soothfastly as if thou wert thy poor penniless kinswoman with no dower

but her merry heart, instead of the rich heir of the Lord Scrope."

So said; so done. The fair cousins rode as for life and death; and not only reached the goodly mansion of Beau-Repaire before the party from the lake, but had plenty of time to adjust the lady Helen's costume and position, so that she should enact the part of Sleeping Beauty as naturally and becomingly as possible, That the attitude was natural, she had satisfactory proof after Agnes and her waiting-woman had retired. Her old nurse, passing accidentally that way, having testified a nurse-like anxiety on the score of her catching cold, and even evinced some disposition to awaken her by way of averting the danger; whilst the good Baron her father, happening also to cross the hall, and seeing his darling, as he believed, asleep, took incredible pains to mitigate his iron tread, and stifle, as far as possible, the jingling of sword and spur,

lest he should disturb her slumbers. In short, so admirable was the counterfeit, that the only person (except those in the secret) not taken in was the Baron's favourite mastiff, Wolf, who looked up in her face with an expression which seemed at once to detect the counterfeit, and to wonder, like an honest animal as he was, what could be the possible motive for such a deceit.

At last, according to Agnes's prediction, Lord Devereux and Sir Philip Poynings entered the hall, and after some talk of the falcon flown and the game taken, of jesses and lures, and a certain beagle called Donzelle, and a riding palfrey, hight Lancelot, the good knight appeared suddenly to perceive the fair lady who filled so drowsily the Warder's chair.

"Ha! thy bonnibelle!" said he in a low voice.

Although her eyes were closed, Helen

felt with absolute certainty that Lord Devereux glanced towards her, and she also felt, she knew not how, that he smiled.

"She looketh well asleep!" continued the knight.

"Indifferent well!" resounded his companion, in a voice as chilling as his words.

"She's a fair damsel," quoth Sir Philip.

"Indifferent fair!" was the response.

"And hath a light foot in a coranto."

"Indifferent light."

"And a sweet voice in a virelai."

"Indifferent—"

"Nay," interrupted the knight; "thou art a very heretic in the matter of beauty, an Infidel, a Pagan. Thy very blood is frozen, that thou speakest thus of one of the fairest maidens of King Henry's Court. If the Lady Helen be not a beauty where wilt thou find one?"

"The damsel is indifferent fair," replied

the Lord Devereux quietly. "But the Lady Katherine Sandys hath a finer shape, and the Lady Piercey a prettier foot. And, for a virelai or a coranto commend me to the bright-eyed Provencale, the burgher's wife of Lyons. Beauty quotha! Thou talkest like the Squire of Dames in the legend. Ha! The rain pours down amain. Come and I'll show thee a suit of Milan armour fit to have figured at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Or, we'll have a bout with the rapiers, or what thou wilt! There's a good hour yet to dinner. Thou'lt beat me at the rapier. I have not tried my weapon against one so well skilled as thyself this half year. Come, it lacks an hour of noon, we shall have time to breathe ourselves." And off the Lord Devereux marched, just soon enough to save his betrothed from the imminent danger of proving her admiration of frank speaking, and her severe love of truth, by

an explosion of tears, or of scolding—or, by'r Lady, by inflicting upon the cheek of her lover such a slap from her fair hand as, half a century later, was no uncommon act of grace from good Queen Bess to her more favoured courtiers!

Poor Helen! From this risk she was happily saved; and when they met at the banquet the recusant had nothing worse to encounter than cold monosyllables and averted eyes. The storm still continued to rage without, and in spite of his lady love's declaration that she was ill at ease, both Lord Devereux and Sir Philip Poynings followed the damsels to the large, low, pleasant chamber, with the rich gilding of its panelled walls, its bay windows and carved chimney, where the young kinswomen, surrounded by their female attendants, pursued their several avocations at the tapestry loom or the broidery frame.

For the first five minutes a dead silence

reigned in the apartment. The Lady Helen was what an enemy would have called sullen, and a friend would have dignified by the name of melancholy; and her hand-maidens dutifully followed their lady's example. Agnes was the first to speak, whilst her cousin was now amusing herself with entangling her gold and silver threads under the notion of winding them, and now filling up a rose-bud with blue silk and a pansy with crimson.

"Hast thou no French rondelay, or English madrigal to sing or to say, my good Lord Devereux? No minstrel tale, or courtly jest to grace thy lady's bower?"

"Say, how chanced the wooing betwixt Maximilien de Montmorenci, and Marguerite de Bethune?" said Poynings, aiding his fair mistress in her attempt to bring about conversation; "when I left the Chateau of St. Germains, Mademoiselle

had taken it into that silly head of hers that the Count wooed her for her broad lands, and the more he courted and flattered the more she disbelieved, until at last 'twas a moot point whether the pretty heiress would not fling herself, and her fiefs and vineyards, olive grounds and all into a nunnery, from mere distrust and suspicion. What might be the end of that love passage, Arthur ?"

"Why the little damsel improved day by day in mistrust and jealousy until, as thou say'st, 'twere a chance but she took refuge in the church from poor Maximilien's luckless courtship. And so it chanced that one fair summer morning standing beside a close planted arbour, a pleached bower of rose and woodbine, the Chevalier d'Harcourt, and Jules de Monthermer began to banter the Count on his misdoubting mistress. ''Tis pity of her,' quoth the Chevalier, 'for of a surety she's

the fairest lady in France.' 'Nay,' replied Maximilien, "Hortense du Plessis hath brighter eyes; and Adine de Beaulieu a sweeter smile; Leocadie de Blondeville hath a finer shape; and for a hand and foot, the young Countess —what name had followed none can tell —for the fair Marguerite darted from the arbour, and Montmorenci, who had known all the while that she was listening, caught her in his arms—aye, even as I shall catch another listener, and said — Oh fairest, sweetest, dearest, how may I tell what *he* said, when I am thinking of none save thee! Of naught save that entire and perfect love which belongeth not to thy father's broad lands, nor even to thy surpassing beauty, but to thine own most dear and precious self"—and catching her in his arms, his lip touched—did it touch?—her snowy brow.

"No, there was no traitor, no treachery,"

continued he, answering the half murmured question which stole forth amidst her blushes and smiles. "I was wending disconsolately among the beechen trees within hearing of my lady love, when mistress Agnes's device tempted me into a counter trial of sauciness. But I am pardoned! Full surely I am pardoned, and if ever again thou should'st mistrust my love or thine own beauty, thou hast but to take a nap in the Warder's chair!"

THE TWO COUSINS:

A STORY FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES.

"Cheerful and grateful tokens the god's love,
And such as wait their pleasures with full hopes."

Beaumont and Fletcher.

"AND do you really intend to walk out on this wind?" said Caroline Selby, the only daughter and heiress of Lady Selby, of Selby Park, to her young cousin, Lucy More, a London girl, who had recently arrived on a visit at the Park, and who, emancipated for almost the first time in her life from the restraints and confine-

ment of a great city, enjoyed the liberty and fresh air of the country, with a zest which her delicate and luxurious kinswoman had some difficulty in comprehending. "Can you really venture to face this wind?"

"Can I!" replied Lucy, gaily, "can I not? Did not you promise me only last night to shew me your flowers and your birds, your conservatories and greenhouses, and hot-houses and flower-garden, your aviary and your pheasantry? And did not my aunt charge me not to let you forget your promise, and to go to none of them without you? Confess this, Caroline. And what but wind—bright, keen, sunny, invigorating wind—can we look for in the blowy month of March? Did you never hear Sheridan's rhyming calendar?—

"January snowy;
February flowy;
March blowy;
April showery;

May flowery;
June bowery;
July moppy;
August croppy;
September poppy;
October breezy;
November wheezy;
December freezy."

"Why one would as soon object to the sun in June; as to the wind—the rough pleasant wind—that sends one home, running, glowing, laughing at one knows not what in this same month of March. But perhaps you object to the sun in the summer?"

"Certainly," replied Caroline, gravely; "I never go out in the summer, except, indeed, for a drive in the pony phaeton; as to walking, I never dream of such a thing."

"Never walk in the summer!" exclaimed Lucy; "live in this beautiful place, which we poor Londoners think it a

privilege only to see, and be content to drive about in a carriage! Oh, my dear cousin, what would we give for these lawns to run about in! And you really do not walk? Can such a thing be possible!"

"I very seldom do walk, as I said before," replied Miss Selby; "and most certainly I am not going out this morning. And I can't imagine why you should wish to go, to get coarse, and sunburnt, and freckled in this wind, when you know that next Monday is my birthday, and we are to have half the country at our children's ball!"

"Well!" said Lucy, suppressing a smile; "I grant the importance of looking well at the ball, especially for you who are its heroine. But are you not afraid of growing wan and pale for want of exercise, sitting all day after lessons are done, poring over this embroidery, and making

so dismal a waste of floss silk and gold thread! Come and show me the pheasants and the flowers, if only for the sake of your complexion."

"Oh, no!" rejoined her cousin, "one has always exercise enough with skipping and the dumb-bells; and just now I have to practise my shawl dance, which Carlotta Grisi brought out at her benefit, and which I have promised mamma to dance on Wednesday;—no fear of my wanting exercise, I promise you."

"And you really won't come then!" exclaimed Lucy, somewhat disappointed. "Well, perhaps the day may be calmer to-morrow, for Lady Selby desired me not to go to the garden or the aviary without you, and of course I shall not think of disobeying her. I dare say the wind will be stiller to-morrow; and in the meantime I'll hunt up the old bailiff, and get him to give me a lesson in agriculture, so that I

may not mistake wheat for grass again, as happened yesterday, to the immortal honour of my cockneyship. It's a mercy I did not take the contents of the field for a crop of clover or turnips; for they being all green, the thing might have happened!" added Lucy, as she ran away laughing at her own blunders, the gayest and happiest creature that ever gladdened that often dull place—a quiet home in a great city.

Lucy Moore had the unspeakable advantage of being the daughter of a man of considerable talent and limited income. Her father was a barrister, who had at last, by patience and assiduity, won through the long probation which that most difficult and uncertain of all professions requires in England, and was now rapidly rising in practice and in reputation; but as his private fortune was small, and his family large, he continued to live in the most prudent and moderate style; so that his daughter, unspoilt

either by over-indulgence or over-education (those two dangers of the children of the rich), accustomed to make her own amusements, and to find gratification in the humblest pleasures, brought into the country those two prime requisites for enjoyment, a healthy mind and a healthy body.

Her cousin, on the other hand, the petted heiress of a wealthy and widowed mother, and the flattered pupil of a fashionable governess, was already, at thirteen, a complete specimen of a modern fine lady, vain, selfish, indolent, and only to be roused into exertion by the desire of display. Lady Selby, idolizing mother though she were, had yet, upon a casual visit to her sister, been struck with the difference between the fretful languor of Caroline and the good-humoured cheerfulness of her cousin; and had invited Lucy to the park, with a latent, though unacknowledged, wish that the animation

and sweetness which she found so delightful, might prove contagious, and partly from a desire to keep the girls constantly together, partly from a hint of her family physician on the advantage of air and exercise, arose the charge to Lucy not to visit the conservatory or the flower garden, the pheasantry, or the aviary, without Miss Caroline.

Well, however, as Lucy loved flowers and birds, and much as she had heard of the splendour of her cousin's collection, she contrived to find plenty of amusement in her morning's walk without their aid. Her friend, the old bailiff, enraptured with her frankness, her gaiety, her intelligence, and her ignorance (for the youthful ignorance that seeks for information is always charming), led her half over his own territory, the Home Farm, and not only gave her the desired instruction on grains and grasses, but volunteered a

lesson on shrubs and trees, and timber in general, from the budding hazel to the rugged oak; to which his little grandson, a lad of about nine years of age, who accompanied them, added a practical lecture on those inhabitants of tree-tops, called birds, and their sayings and doings in the shape of songs and bird-nests; so that between her two companions, Edward and his grandfather, Lucy had never been more gratified.

This happened on a Tuesday. Wednesday was still windy, and Caroline was still indisposed for any exercise but that of the shawl-dance, so that Lucy was fain to have recourse to the escort of Edward, who had arrived to offer his services, with a present of a string of birds' eggs, half-a-dozen yards long, his prime treasure, which, had it been a rope of pearls, he would equally have offered, so completely had Lucy's sweet manners won his heart.

He was but too happy to accompany her about the park, and show her the dells where the primroses grew thickest, and the sunny banks where the purple violets literally coloured the ground.

Thursday was damp; and Caroline, afraid of taking cold, stuck to her embroidery and her shawl-dance.

Friday was cold; and still Miss Caroline dared not venture.

Saturday was sunny, intolerably sunny; and the fair heiress feared for her complexion.

Sunday, the weather was perfect, neither windy, nor sunny, nor damp, nor cold; but Miss Selby, having ridden to church in a close carriage, discovered, that having been out once that morning, she could not go out again.

Monday was the day of the ball, when of course its young heroine never dreamt of encountering additional fatigue, and

Lucy, returning from her ramble, was thinking, with mingled pleasure and amusement, that after that evening she would stand some chance of seeing the birds and the flowers, which she had now been a week in the Home without catching a glimpse of, and that at all events she would, after that night, see no more of the shawl-dance, of which (all Carlotta as Caroline thought herself) her cousin began to be a little weary; when, on entering the hall, she found the whole family in confusion and dismay, surgeons sent for, the ball postponed, and the entire household in consternation. Practising the eternal shawl-dance, and using for the first time the new and splendid scarf which had been sent from London for the purpose, Miss Selby's foot had caught in the drapery, and after refraining for a whole week to go a hundred yards from the hall-door with her visitor, in order to preserve herself in beauty for this ball, a

worse misfortune than taking cold, or looking worse, or tanned, or freckled, had befallen the fair Terpsichore,—she had sprained her ankle, and the famous dance remained undanced, and the festival was put aside, whilst its poor heroine continued during the showery month of April, and the flowery May, just lifted from her bed to the sofa, fretting over her compelled, and therefore irksome, confinement, and longing for nothing so much as the power of getting out with Lucy, her kind and tender nurse, to the conservatory and the pheasantry, the aviary, and the flower-garden, making virtuous resolutions against indolence and shawl-dances, and agreeing in the sage moral deduced by her cousin, from this accident—that nothing can be worse for young ladies, or, for the matter of that, for old ones either, than the power of having at all times and on all occasions completely their own way.

THE OAKEN CROSS.

A CHAPTER FROM THE CHRONICLES OF ADLERSBERG.

My high-blown pride
At length broke under me.
SHAKSPEARE.

PART I.

SHOWETH HOW THE LADY ERMENGARDE EARNED FOR HERSELF THAT ILL TITLE OF THE PROUD LADY.

THERE are few midwinter nights seemingly so long or so dreary as the one fragrant hour between a July moon-set and day-dawn was felt to be by one lonely watcher in the beleaguered Tower of Adlersberg, the aged and pious Cistercian, Father Cyril. It was no light fear that

could cause the good monk to quail and tremble with apprehension, through that fairest and freshest of summer hours, when the dew, a natural rosary, hangs impearled upon the tree of the forest and the herb of the field, calling sinful souls to prayer and praise. No light or vain imaginings could so perturb his spirit; for he had been accustomed to sharp penances, being a man by nature of rebellious passions; one who, as folk have told even certain of the aged brethren of St. Basil, his own convent, had in his time undergone fierce and frequent struggles with the evil one, loth to quit his hold upon so strong a heart: but what he thought, or what he felt, or what he feared, during that weary space when the sand passed once through the hour-glass as he knelt before the window looking out beyond the grim battlements of the tower, repeating again and again, with his lips, the Ave to which no

effort could bend his mind—the desperate fear of that hour was sorer to abide than fast or vigil, hair-cloth or scourge, or the far harder conflict with the foe within, the worldly desires and revengeful promptings which had darkened the days of his hot youth.

"No sound of succour yet!" muttered he; "and scarce the faintest streak of day in the east! Oh, Holy Mother! bring on the dawn ere I perish of expectation! Conrad! Oswald! Methinks I hear a stir beneath the walls amongst our besiegers. They keep true watch; whilst our varlets—Conrad! I say; Oswald! Theodore! They heed me not, worn out, poor knaves, with the assault of yester-eve. An' Egbert were here, he would have heard me! Oh, if this coming day bring not the Landgrave to our aid, then, blessed Virgin! I dare not think of what will follow. Look down upon us, Mary, full of grace! Save this

innocent maiden from the false Baron, who, partly to possess himself of her broad lands, partly to avenge her refusal of his proffered hand, hath set himself down before her castle, with mercenaries from far lands,—bowmen from the Cantons, lancers from the Rhine—the swarthy sons of the south and the fair-haired Dane have joined the league; and swears—shame to knighthood!—that ere the siege be raised the Lady Ermengarde shall sue to him, aye, on her bended knee, to plight the troth she spurned so haughtily, whilst he——That noise again! It is too surely the trampling of feet, the clattering of armour, the bursting——Hark! What sound is that? Of a surety the great gates be creaking on their hinges. The foe will be upon us ere I can warn the noble maiden, or gather her defenders around her." And, snatching up a huge sword, Father Cyril departed on his double

errand of seeking the Lady Ermengarde and collecting the over-worn vassals and domestics, who, under the command of the seneschal, had hitherto held the besiegers at bay, expecting every day the relief which now seemed hopeless.

Trembling with age, and his own impatient spirit chafing at the wrong he lacked power to redress, the monk tottered through a long stone hall which pierced the castle from east to west, when he was stayed by a sight piteous to look upon. The Lady Ermengarde, worn by the watching and misery of this cruel and obstinate siege (when was ever maiden beset so rudely for her broad lands and her strong towers?), had been seized by slumber; she, that coy and stately maiden, even in the open gallery chamber, where men-at-arms might be each instant passing to and fro. She had fallen into a rude chair, and was now as fast asleep as though

the sister angels, Love and Peace, kept watch beside her pillow. Dolefully wan was her cheek, as if the pale maiden roses had been washed white with bitter tears, and her long yellow hair, all unbraided, hung round her like a veil. Her rich garments were disordered and stained. None who had seen her then would have called her by the name she had borne to her present undoing, the Proud Lady of Adlersberg. None would have believed that such a title could have belonged to one so gentle and so sad! All the sadder seemed her sleep for the faint smile that lingered round her lips. Few were in the castle save untrained lacqueys and rude grooms, sorry protectors, even had their numbers equalled those of their assailants; whilst, without the walls, pressed onward that audacious baron and his riotous soldiery, resolute to storm the castle and bear away the heir: and yet there she sat in her love-

liness, drooping and pallid as a lily broken down by a summer shower; but with such a look of peace and love as if her cheek were resting upon her mother's bosom.

Father Cyril bent over that fair form. He could not pass her without a prayer; and the tears would fall from his aged eyes upon her slender hands, unconscious as she was of his presence or his sympathy. But the prayer and the tears were stayed by surprise; as, in spite of the close-coming peril — every passing instant making it clearer that the foe was astir beneath, the monk could not choose but start and bless himself as he bethought him of the waywardness of woman's will, whilst he gazed upon a quaintly fashioned oaken cross nestled in the white bosom, which, if court gossips said truth, had disdained to wear a carkanet of ruby stones proffered by the hand of a king's son.

Now, there belonged to that small

oaken cross the old tale of love repaid by scorn, of high-born beauty looking disdainfully at lowly faith, of patient service and insolent rebuke, which makes one of the darkest and thorniest pathways of the tangled labyrinth called life. And sure tale is it, and sad as true: The cabin looks across the valley to the castle, and says, We both contain human hearts; and the castle—Ah, well-a-day for woman's haughtiness, said I not that she was called the Proud Lady of Adlersberg.

Egbert with the raven locks was the son of the Ladye's falconer, almost he might have been called her foster-brother, since, an orphan from her earliest days, his mother was the Lady Ermengarde's nurse. Nevertheless the boy was so much older than the fair girl as to bestow upon him the privilege of enacting the part of her protector, in the sports of their childish days. His father, old Heinrich,

was, as I have said, the falconer of Adlersberg; what place the youth Egbert filled were hard to tell. By his good leave, none but himself should have served his fair mistress. He alone tended her favourite hawks. The tassel gentil from Norway, that the Emperor rode fifty leagues to see strike down her quarry, was of Egbert's training; Egbert held her greyhound in his silken leash! none, save Egbert, taught her jennet his paces, or held her bridle rein. The very pinks and gilliflowers that grew in a nook beside the north bastion—Alack, the hoof of the war-horse hath trampled it low!—were of Egbert's tending. He brought her a dappled fawn, whose dam had been killed by some Robin Hood of the Black Forest; and even whilst echoing her maledictions on the heartless churl who had orphaned her spotted favourite, he climbed the topmost bough of a stately beech to steal

for her the golden couplets of the turtle dove—emblems too true of his despairing passion! In early youth, almost in boyhood, he had twice, so said the bower-women, saved his fair mistress's life: once in the chase, when the boar stood fiercely at bay, and Egbert came between the furious animal and the Lady Ermengarde, and stretched the fierce and dangerous quarry dead at her feet; and again, when autumn rains had swollen the summer brook to a torrent, and her palfrey, borne along by the strong current, lost his footing, and was carried helplessly down the stream. Oh, how Egbert plunged into those deep waters! how he grasped the rein and breasted the flood, and plucked the Lady from her sinking steed, and laid her safe, albeit trembling, upon the grassy bank!

Those were happy days for poor Egbert. But boyhood glided rapidly into youth,

and youth again passed into manhood. And then, weary of courtship and of suitors, and, perchance, the more severe with Egbert, the humblest and faithfullest of all, he who dared to love but not to woo,—the severer outwardly with him and with herself, because, half conscious of some relenting softness in her inmost heart—then it was that she earned, by bitter speech and haughty bearing, the title of the Proud Lady of Adlersberg.

Curiously ready in handicrafts of divers sorts, as though the skill he had never learned were born with him, Egbert was wont to beguile his lonely evenings (for the good falconer, his father, and his mother, the nurse of the proud lady, were dead and gone), or to employ himself over the Christmas hearth, whilst old wives told old stories, and minstrels and troubadours chanted their virelays, with fashioning rosaries, and bowls, and coffers, and

such-like toys, to which the craft of the workman gives their price; and, amongst he rest of his trinketry, he had carved this humble crucifix from a fallen branch of oak, which he had one day lifted from his lady's path, and had even dared to convey it into her bower, wreathed round with a garland of most rare flowers, some said, arranged after the manner of the Turkish Paynims, whereby buds and blossoms are made to discourse love. Well did Father Cyril remember the wrath which had flashed from the maiden's eyes, and the angry words in which she had commanded that Egbert should be chased from the demesne, and the cabin where he dwelt razed to the ground; a warning, said she (and her lip curled as she spake), to suitors of all degrees, from the prince to the serf. Well also did he remember what was told by the bower-woman, of a pleading voice that

was heard under the windows of her chamber; and that the Lady Ermengarde had caused it to be proclaimed throughout the castle, that if that voice were again to disturb her slumbers, the seneschal had it in command to loose the blood-hounds. And from that time forth naught more was said of Egbert. But the lady waxed prouder to all wooers, and sad and fitful in hall or bower. And now, behold, when years had passed, and Egbert with the raven curls was well nigh forgotten, it was the scorned relic of his aspiring suit, the very oaken cross, carved by his hand, which in that moment of extremity was found to be worn secretly in the icy bosom of that cold and haughty beauty! Brief space had Father Cyril to marvel at woman's changeful fantasy. Again the clash of armour below! again that fearful sound, as though the drawbridge were stealthily lowered, and the portcullis sud-

denly raised, and the great gate gently opened!

"I will not waken her for yet a moment," said the good old man; and, grasping his weapon, he sallied forth to inquire what these noises might mean.

PART II.

SHOWETH WHEREFORE THE EFFIGY OF THE OAKEN CROSS CAME TO BE CUT IN STONE IN THE GALLERY OF THE CASTLE OF ADLERSBERG.

SHORT time was Father Cyril thence. He won back speedily to the side of the Lady Ermengarde (still smiling faintly in her sleep); and, made rough and hasty by the sure knowledge of instant peril, he seized her chill pale hands, and raised her suddenly from the chair.

"Waken, poor maiden! Waken! All is lost; our last hope is gone."

"What is this?" responded that sad lady, scarcely aroused from her pleasant dreams to the sense of present danger: "Gertrude! Oswald! where be ye? Rosabella not yet saddled? We ride forth to-day." But her words ceased on a sudden, for she read in the flashing eye, the quivering lip, and the changed bearing of the old man; well nigh bestraught with fear and anger, that somewhat terrible had chanced; albeit her wildest fantasy had pictured naught so terrible as his tidings.

"They have deserted us, vassal and menial, groom and man-at-arms. The page that served the cup in the hall; the tirewoman that decked thee for the banquet, all have forsaken us! Nay, that maketh but a portion of their treason. The defences of this thy place of strength

—drawbridge, portcullis, even the iron gate—have they opened to the enemy, false traitors that they be, and then withdrawn their own base persons by the eastern postern. We two are lost: Alas! that I should live to see thee in such a strait, and have no power to aid or rescue. We two are alone in the castle."

TheLady Ermengarde bore a high heart, and refrained from womanish lamentations, from shrieks and tears. She clasped the crucifix to her bosom, no longer caring whether it were hidden or no.

"May the blessed Virgin look down upon us!" was all that she said. Then, after a pause, and in a firmer voice, she added—

"Was this treachery, father, or fear?"

"A mixture perchance of both, fair daughter. The seneschal I have misdoubted long. He, hoary traitor, hath sold himself body and soul for vile lucre;

and cowardice and base terror seconding the false knave's persuasions, have corrupted the rest. Oh that I could meet that Judas! old though I be"—

"Nay, nay, kind father, grasp not thy sword! We have more need of thy rosary. The noise thickens about us, clashing of armour, and trampling of steeds; sounds such as tell of strife and struggle. Seek not to drag me hence, Father Cyril. The courts must be filled with the rude soldiery. I will rest here and abide my enemy. Pray for us both, and let not thy voice falter. Saidst thou that all had forsaken me? That of the many who filled my halls and owned my rule none remained to defend his poor mistress?"

"Not so!" replied a voice from the threshold, as a young man stood there with a sword ready drawn in his hand. "You have yet left you one defender, Lady of Adlersberg, beside the good father and the

holy saints; and thy foes shall bestride his dead body before a hair of your fair head shall be touched."

"Whoso spake these words?" cried the Lady Ermengarde, greatly troubled, staying herself against Father Cyril, to hinder her from falling; he also, the good father, was strangely moved; for the speech sounded to both like a voice from the grave, and they perceived that the speaker was none other than the falconer's son, Egbert of the raven locks.

The young man remained on the threshold, looking away while he spoke.

"Remember you not, Lady of Adlersberg, that I warned you that this day might come? Remember you not that I besought you in the day of your bitter scorn to take heed how you trampled upon the true heart that never would betray or forsake you in sorrow or in peril? Remember you not the firebrand that laid

waste the cottage of your father's ancient and faithful servant, of your own foster mother? They were dead, but not the less should their dwelling, the dwelling of their only child, have been sacred to Ermengarde of Adlersberg. And those bloodhounds, remember you not them? and how for a whole night they tracked as they might have tracked a murderer or a thief one whose only crime lay in your beauty? And will you not remember, when this dark hour hath passed, that it was he, the despised, the trampled on, the outcast, who returned to share your peril, to die at your feet? For, as God is my witness, I look to leave my corpse upon these stones; too happy so to die, loveliest and most beloved! Forgive me these my ungenerous reproaches! Thrice blessed to die for thee!"

How fared it now, think you, with the proud Lady Ermengarde? Fain would

she have made reply, fain by words or tears have done honour to such exceeding constancy and nobleness; but she could not speak. She could only point with her finger to the crucifix upon her bosom.

Well might the youth, Egbert, start to see his own poor love-token so richly graced; but no time was this for discourse or dalliance. The heavy tread of armed men echoed through the castle, sounding to that poor maiden like her death knell; whilst her bold champion bent his gaze on the stair, up which the soldiery were crowding, and, standing a little aside, drew a long breath and manfully grasped the sword in his hand.

"Speak to him for me, Father Cyril!" murmured the lady, half dead betwixt love, shame, and fear. "Wilt thou let him die." And she uplifted her voice, so as to be distinctly heard by him to whom she spoke.

"I entreat thee, kind Egbert, for the love of Heaven; I adjure thee by this blessed cross; stay not here to peril thy life for me! Dost hear me, Egbert? Rather would I die a thousand fold!"

But Egbert answered not, unless bending to kiss that token crucifix as Ermengarde held it in her hand, and then grasping the sword with a firmer clutch, and a look of high resolve, might be held for answer.

Nearer and nearer came that heavy tread—the tread of mail-clad men, mingled with hoarse voices and clang of arms; and that poor lady already beheld mounting the stair, host upon host of strange, rough visages, gleaming fiercely under their glittering helms. She shrank shuddering from the sight, and closed her eyes, and tried to pray, clinging closely to Father Cyril, who would fain have been safely rid of his fair burthen, that he might have borne a

manful part in that fearful and most unequal struggle.

Cheerily the warrior band advanced toward the gallery chamber, as men who bring with them a sure welcome; but, as the foremost passed the arched portal, the ringing blow of a sword was followed by a low groan, and the clang of armour, as one fell dead across the threshold. Then arose a fierce cry.

"Hew him down! Cleave him to the waist! Whoso dareth bar the way of the Landgrave? Look up bright lady, you are rescued!"

She heareth the voice, that proud lady; she flieth to the portal; she throweth herself between her champion and his foes; she clingeth around his neck; she careth for nought but Egbert, as the blood from a wound in his arm welled forth upon her white raiment. Little heeded Egbert that wound; for, saved by the Landgrave's

band from her rude assailants, who saw themselves enforced to flee in the very instant of that caitiff seneschal's treachery, the Lady of Aldersberg cast away her pride, and amidst tears and blushes, proclaimed her lover the falconer's son; bestowed upon him, that poor Egbert, her hand and her rich domains; and caused the oaken cross, wreathed round with its garland of rare flowers, to be carved in stone on the keystone of every arch in the great gallery of Aldersberg.

THE BRIDE.

"As sure a dog as ever fought at head."

SHAKSPEARE.

THEY who have had a favourite dog,—and who has not?—who have felt the solace of his mute sympathy in affliction, and the animation and gaiety which his gambols throw around our happier hours will not disdain to participate in the grief of the humble family of Angus Cameron, as they gazed upon the faithful creature who, after lifting up his head and looking in his master's face for the last time, sank

patiently down, and, whilst poor little Jeanie flung herself beside him, stroking his stiffening neck, and mixing her fast falling tears with the life-blood that dabbled his shaggy coat, stretched out his limbs, gave two or three convulsive twitches, and died. Jeanie would not believe that Bran was dead; and even her grandfather, although contradicting her assertion that he still lived, with the irritability of sorrow, deepened by indignation, raised the body of his favourite, with a half hope that life was not extinct, and when it fell back a heavy weight upon the clay floor of their cabin, broke into bitter denunciations upon the cowardly tyrant who had slain, in wantonness of anger and power, the best and bravest dog that ever trod the braes of Glendorroch.

The peculiar circumstances of the people and the time lent a double force to the old clansman's malediction. It was about

twenty years after the Forty-five, in which unhappy insurrection the chief of that branch of the Camerons, together with many chieftains of that brave and ancient house had adhered to the last to the fortunes of Charles Edward, had been attainted and forfeited, and had died broken-hearted and in exile. His only son, too young at the time of the rebellion to partake of his father's guilt (the old retainer did not give that name to the part his leader, Glendorroch, took in that remarkable rising), was deprived of his inheritance, whilst the large property from which he derived his territorial title was bestowed upon a Campbell, the sworn enemy of the clan, who had intermarried with a distant kinswoman of the Camerons. He, too, was dead, leaving only a daughter, reared and educated in England; whilst an Englisher, or, at the best, a lowland Scot, an Elliott of the debateable land, was placed

by the Campbells, her father's kindred, as agent, looker, factor, (which ever were the obnoxious word for a most obnoxious office) over the estates and vassals of the young heiress.

He it was, a keen sportsman, and a hot and fiery man, who already deeply unpopular amongst the clan, with whose language and manners he was unacquainted, and whom he at once mistrusted and despised—he it was, this very Gilbert Elliott, who had now filled up the measure of his sins, by shooting Bran. Whilst little Jeanie was crying herself into comparative calmness over the body of the faithful creature, so long her playmate, Angus found a relief nearly similar in pouring forth, in his native Gaelic, the story of his wrongs, with a fury and energy which really amounted to eloquence, so deeply was the old man stung by the mingled passions of grief and hate.

The story in plain English, and separated from Angus Cameron's bitter vituperation, was briefly this :

Elliott, who had, as it appeared, instant occasion for red-deer venison, to celebrate the coming of age and expected arrival of the fair heiress, had set forth before sunrise upon this unlucky morning, attended by two or three Highland gillies and a brace of well-trained dogs, with the purpose of stalking some deer, which had been seen upon the hills beyond the lake. At length he reached a station where, concealed by a tree, he was enabled to take a true aim at the noble deer, which he had been dodging for so many hours ; when, just as he had raised his rifle to fire at the quarry, which stood, half suspicious, half secure, on the brow of a small eminence, within range of a shot, the baying of a hound was heard on the other side of the hill, and in an instant, the stag bounded

away out of sight and hope; and Bran, who had unhappily attended his master, probably for some purpose not far dissimilar, dashed towards the very spot from whence his approach had driven the destined prey. The temptation of immediate vengeance, not merely upon the poor dog, but upon his master, for the loss of his game, proved irresistible. Elliott fired, and Bran fell; and the scene of fierce and angry recrimination which followed ended in the Lowlander demanding the fire-arms of which, as he justly said, the law forbade not merely the use but the possession among the forfeited clans; and on the veteran's indignant refusal to deliver up his weapon, he gave him notice that he should send not merely to take away by force all weapons found in the cottage by the brae; but to dislodge the inhabitants, and, if need were, to pull down the dwelling. "The Leddy," quoth the man of office, "shall

find nae nest of rebels on her land gin fire and sword can do their wark."

"The Leddy!" said old Angus to his daughter, quoting the title with peculiar bitterness.—"The Leddy, and this to the foster-father," added he, in the language of old Gael, in which the remainder of the dialogue was carried on, "of Claude, the rightful chief! Ye drew your earliest nourishment from the same bosom, Cathleen! were carried in the same arms! Many a time hath my poor wife owned that she loved the brave boy—that was after he was an orphan, Cathleen,—as well as her own fair girl. Oh, that he were but here! There be hearts and arms enow in Glendorroch, to teach this Sassenach looker that the Camerons will submit to no woman's rule, least of all when that woman is a Campbell."

"You forget, dear father," rejoined Cathleen, "that the blood of the Camerons

also flows in the veins of the young heiress. I would she were arrived! She, at least, is not responsible for the evil deeds of her kinsmen and guardians, or for the hasty and violent doings of their Factor. And if she bear a woman's heart, she will not see a white haired follower of her mother's house turned, with his widowed daughter and her helpless bairn, to couch with the hill fox and the roe. I would that the Lady of Glendorroch were here, rather, far rather, than the brave and gracious boy—may heaven bless and prosper him! —whom we cannot but call the chief! Too much of kindly blood hath been shed in Glendorroch. We must have no struggle, dear father; must not give just cause for severity to these Sassenach rulers. Hark! who beats at the door?"

"The Factor and his folk," replied Angus, grasping his weapon with a resolute air.

"No! No!" was the answer, as she lifted the latch and admitted a fair haired young man, who, gazing at her for a moment with his whole heart in his radiant smile and joyous eyes, threw his arms round her waist, exclaiming, "Why! have you forgotten your foster brother?"

"Claude!"

"Glendorroch!" cried the father and daughter involuntarily. All the faithful clansman's devotion was in one greeting, as the old man doffed his bonnet to his chief; all the tender woman's affection in the other, as she pressed the hand of her old playfellow.

Cheerfully and cordially were their greetings returned. Claude's look, as he resumed his old seat by the ingle side, and looked about, and spake to Angus as if they had parted yesterday, making acquaintance with Jeanie, alluding slightly but feelingly to the loss of her father, and

entering into the general grief and indignation for the death of Bran, the descendant of a race of dogs who had belonged to the chieftains of Glendorroch from generation to generation.

"The Saxon churl!" muttered he; "he shall abide the deed." And then waiving off until another time the particular account of himself and his fortunes which their affectionate interest required and deserved, and saying only generally that he had entered the service of a German prince, and, after filling the post of aide-de-camp to a distinguished officer, had accompanied his old commander on an important embassy, so that his prospects were fair, he returned to the grievance of the hour, and offered his assistance to Jeanie, who was by this time seated on his knee, to dig a grave among the birks and gowans for her poor favourite.

They sallied forth accordingly. It was

a bright autumn evening. The hills were purple with heather, whilst the narrow valley, through which the bright burn ran wimpling, was green as an emerald, except where the sun slept with a golden shine upon patches of velvet turf, and the holly, and the mountain ash, with their coral berries crept up the sides of the hills. Tufts of bluebells waved lightly in the air, and the silver bark of the weeping birch glittered through the light and feathery foliage.

The scene was full of pastoral beauty, and Claude Cameron surveyed it with the feelings of an exile restored to his native land; feelings with whose unusual softness the wailings of the tender-hearted little girl over her dead favourite accorded well. The young soldier would have respected in another the tears that certainly stood in his eyes, if they did not find their way down his cheeks; nevertheless, he was a

little ashamed of the emotion, and gathered himself up quickly, when just as he was replacing the turf over Bran's humble grave he heard loud sounds of contest and distress from the path leading to the cottage, and was aware of Gilbert Elliott's myrmidons thrusting forth Angus Cameron, in spite of the old man's sturdy resistance, and the alarmed cries of his daughter.

In an instant Claude was at their side. The weapon withheld with a lion's strength from the factor's emissaries was yielded with a child-like docility (such was the instinct of feudal obedience) to his chieftain, the real, although unacknowledged, head of Clan Cameron; and one word spoken apart, aided by the chink of gold in a well plenished purse, overcame the lesser difficulty of persuading Gilbert Elliott's people to stay any further proceedings until the arrival of the lady, now,

from intelligence communicated by an avant courier, confidently expected on the morrow.

The morrow came, and gathered together by every means which the indefatigable Factor could devise, half the retainers of the house awaited the youthful heiress before the gates of Glendorroch. Our friends Angus and Cathleen, accompanied by little Jeanie, attended in fulfilment of a promise to Claude, who was nowhere visible. The old man was dark and gloomy; and so was all around, in spite of young girls carrying baskets of flowers, and children with garlands, and pipers playing the gathering, and a broken-nosed cannon firing as often in the half hour as an engineer marvellously well adapted to his artillery, being lame of an arm and leg, could contrive to compass. Every outward symbol of welcome that mere power could command was prodigally bestowed. No-

thing was wanting, except that true and genuine love and loyalty, which no Helen Campbell, none save the real Chieftain of old line, could excite in the warm hearts of their faithful people. The Lady arrived; as fair a Helen as any since that first and frailest of the name, who wrought the woes of Troy. All smiles and blushes the fair lady came, but few gazed upon her, for at her side sat a noble-looking man in the very prime of life, in whom the crowd recognised at a glance, the youth brought up in Angus's cottage, the rightful heir of Glendorroch. All eyes were fixed upon him, as leaping from the carriage, he half lifted out his lovely companion, turned her gently, abashed and shamefaced as she stood, towards the wondering and expectant throng, and doffing gallantly his plumed bonnet, said, with a countenance radiant with happiness, "Friends and kinsmen, this is your lady and mine, my own dear wife, Helen Cameron."

THE BEACON.

"Put out the light—and then."

SHAKSPEARE.

"A LIGHT upon the cliff above the cottage, say'st thou, Senor Don Jose? A light from the post which I have in charge! A signal to the smugglers, belike, or the enemy? Now, by St. Jago, great man as thou thinkest thyself, procurador, and what not, thou may'st rue the day when thou insultedst an old soldier and an old Castilian! There is some pith and marrow left in this right arm still," continued the

veteran, extending as tough and sinewy a limb as ever grasped a Toledo, "and by our Lady of Pity, he who accuses me of treason is like to feel its weight, were he twenty times a procurador. If Catalina had married thee now, as thou wantedst last vintage, or if I had acceded to thy other proposal, and exchanged my good olive ground for thy patch of vineyard, we might never have heard of this matter. But the girl and her father were both of them wiser. I warn thee once again, meddle not with an old soldier."

"Nay, good Diego," rejoined the little lawyer, shrinking instinctively from the harsh tones and threatening gestures of him of the Beacon Rock, "the saints only know whether Catalina or I should have had the worst of that bargain; and as to my sunny vineyard, it's worth a dozen of thy lean hungry olive grounds any day in the year. I bear thee no malice, however;

Senor Diego," continued the procurador in the spiteful accent in which a disclaimer of spite is usually pronounced; "I bear no malice, either to thee or to Senora Mencia, thy wife, and still less to Catalina; only I warn thee once more that if the Beacon on the Cliff be again seen alight without orders from the Christino chiefs, the warder will right speedily find himself within the walls of a prison." And off the little lawyer walked. After taking two or three steps, however, he returned. "Perhaps, Senor Diego, if you really know nothing of the matter,—I love to be candid where I can,—the pretty damsel Lina may have caused the blaze by way of signal to her muleteer lover, Gil Gomez." And now, having shot off his last arrow, the worthy attorney walked himself off, with a comfortable persuasion that he had made his old acquaintance, and would-*not*-be father-in law, thoroughly uncomfortable.

Our friend Diego was, as he had truly said, an old soldier and an old Castilian, brought to the frontier by some one of the many captains who had fought the cause of the infant queen with more or less ill success, and placed in a post of real rather than ostensible trust and importance, as being one upon whose good faith and intelligence reliance might be safely placed.

The Beacon Cliff, with which at its only point of access his cottage communicated, was a lofty and almost perpendicular rock, commanding alike the sea-coast and the mountains, and most useful as a signal post for the transmission of local intelligence to the bands in those wild hills and the ships in the offing. A narrow wooded drawbridge, beneath which gushed a rapid stream, led from the gallery which surrounded Diego's dwelling to the only level spot upon the Beacon Cliff. From that landing to the summit, the ascent, as

viewed from below, was apparently impracticable to any foot less light and tenacious than that of the goat or the chamois. But certain slight inequalities, natural or artificial, winding round the face of the rock, gave to the bold and practised climber sufficient footing to gain the small platform, upon which swung from a strong iron pole a bucket of the same material, filled with tar and with the resinous woods of the country, of which easily ignited and highly combustible materials a stock sufficient for many months' consumption was deposited on the spot.

A more effectual signal post could hardly be devised, and, in the disturbed state of the country, agitated by civil war, plagued by the bold inland smugglers called contrabandistas, and exposed to so much change and anarchy that the English naval officers, ever the Queen Regent's

best allies, hardly knew whether the district was possessed by Carlists or Christinos, the Beacon, confided as it had been to bold and faithful hands, had often led to successful co-operation, and prevented a useless sacrifice of men and ammunition.

Diego's family consisted of his good wife, Mencia, and his pretty daughter, Catalina, who, as we have just seen, had made him an effectual enemy, by refusing the meddling lawyer, Don Jose Ortiz, a wizen-faced, withered sample of the Spanish Hidalgo, who (and we suppose the attorney-phobia is the same in all nations) had been for years the pest and dread of the country round, and found his power rather extended than limited by the present state of partisan warfare; inasmuch as, by keeping fair with both parties, and denouncing very impartially friend or foe to whichever happened to be uppermost, he contrived to increase his importance

and fill his coffers. His accusation had completely mystified poor Diego, especially that part which alluded to Catalina.

"The Beacon alight last night! Impossible!" So ran his half-muttered thoughts. "Poor Lina! That she does like that gay muleteer, Gil Gomez, with his songs and his mandoline, is, I fear, too true; and, after all, if he have money enough to keep the girl comfortably, why should they not marry some day or other? 'Tis a light-hearted, good humoured spark, and she fancies him, as twenty years ago I fancied her mother. But as to Lina's lighting the Beacon—with the great key of the house door under my pillow; and at night, too, when I myself can hardly keep my footing; and she never up there except once or twice, when she would go to help me to carry the fir faggots, and was forced to turn back before she got half-way, for very giddiness—Bah! The

thing's impossible! and, by Santiago, the Beacon could not be a-light. 'Tis a lie of that cankered little lawyer, and does not deserve another thought. I'll just go and ask Mencia whether she locked the door of the balcony last night. Of course she did. And, that door being locked, how could Lina get to the drawbridge? and why should she light the Beacon? Bah! It's a lie from the first word to the last, and I'll think no more of it."

Forming internally this wise resolution, but unable to direct his mind to any other subject, Diego (for this conversation had happened in the olive ground on which Don Jose had cast his eye) strode rapidly towards his cottage; as he neared which, shrill sounds of female voices gave token of an animated discussion between Senora Mencia, the wife of his bosom, and certain neighbours, her gossips and friends. He arrived in time to hear their dismissal.

"The Beacon alight, good Blanca? and you saw it with your own eyes, you and Pepita? You must have been dreaming, good people! No soul could get to the rock except from the drawbridge that leads from our balcony, and I locked the door myself with these hands. You were dreaming, good gentlefolk! Pepita there says she saw Santa Teresa clad in white, flying over the top of the rock. Santa Teresa, quotha! A fair good day to ye, ladies both! Santa Teresa, forsooth! as if my husband Diego Hernandez, could not manage his own Beacon without her help. Santa Teresa—to be sure, there was a chapel dedicated to her, but the Carlists rent that down. Santa Teresa," —continued Senora Mencia, upon whose nerves the notion of a saint, clad in white, flying about so near their cottage, seemed to have made an unpleasant impression, "I hope we say as many Aves as our

neighbours. I wonder whether burning a candle before our Lady of Pity—or to vow a pilgrimage—I'll ask father Jerome. Did you see the light of the Beacon last night, Lina?" added her mother, as the voice of the dark-eyed beauty was heard from the cottage, singing one of the many songs which Gil Gomez had composed in her honour. She interrupted herself to answer Senora Mencia's question, and then recommenced her song:

"The Beacon last night? No, dear mother.

"Girls! for truant hearts a playing,
Vainly vaunted charms arraying,
Flower and veil and fan you ply:
One rare spell your snares is spoiling,
As, o'er steep Sierra toiling
Homeward comes your favourite boy.
'Mid the mules before him creeping,
'Mid his comrades round him sleeping,
Sees he only—Guess and sigh!"

"Leave that foolish song, Catalina,

and answer me at once. Did you see Santa Teresa last night flying over our rock?"

"Santa Teresa flying over our rock, dear mother!" exclaimed Catalina, in very natural astonishment. "Santa Teresa flying over our rock! Heard ever mortal such a question! Santa Teresa!"

"Clad in white," rejoined Mercia. "Pepita and Blanca vow by all the saints that they saw her light the Beacon last night, and then fly away over the face of the cliff. They talked, too, of coming to watch again to-night."

"They have been dreaming, mother! Poor old Pepita passes her life in seeing visions. Poor old Pepita! She is not what she used to be, since the loss of her son. You must have seen how her poor white head shakes under her mantilla; but she is a kind creature. To be sure Blanca ought to have known better. But

dreams are catching, dear mother, especially dreams of the saints; and you know my father has always, from motives of prudence, made a little mystery of this Beacon. Are you quite sure that he did not light it last night? I saw nothing, I heard nothing. But I sleep so sound; for Gil could never wake me," sighed she, in a lower voice. "I wish Gil were here again, safe from these dangerous passes." And then the song was resumed, as she went quietly about her household work:—

"Girls whose lattice late he haunted,
Merry Gil, no more enchanted,
Laughs if frown or smile ye ply.
One thing only tempts his glances,
In the churches, markets, dances,
Though a queen herself were by.
One bright star hath fixed him yonder,
To a lovelier, gentler, fonder;
Must I name it—Lina's eye." *

* I am indebted for these characteristic stanzas, with their pretty castanet snap, to one who excels me in a great many points of authorship, besides the writing of national songs, my kind and valued friend, Mr. Henry Chorley.

This dialogue, which he had overheard without making his appearance either to the departing guests or the incensed hostess, did not tend to quiet the keeper of the Beacon. Catalina's words and manner had completely assured him that she had no hand in the matter, and although a devout son of the Catholic Church, he was yet a person of too much sense to put any faith in the St. Teresa version of the story. He had, however, from the testimony of the two women, confirming as it did that of Don Jose, little doubt but the rock had really been ascended, and the Beacon lighted; probably by some daring Carlist spy, to lead the crews and commanders of the English vessels upon the coast into a trap, by inducing them to land upon some spot only too well prepared for their reception; and he determined to walk to Marquina, a small town in the neighbourhood, for the double purpose of hearing

whether any mischief had befallen by sea or land, and to secure some resolute man to watch with him the ensuing night. "If poor Gil were here," thought he, as he passed through a grove of fine cork trees, echoing unconsciously his daughter's dearest wish; "or, failing him, Lope Mureno; he is strong, agile, and resolute. Aye! I'll secure Lope Mureno; and we'll conceal ourselves among the pine faggots on the platform, or keep guard below, according to circumstances."

* * * *

Twelve hours had passed since the conversation between Jose and Diego in the olive-ground. It was now midnight, and dark from the want of moon, but clear and cloudless. "This is a strange story that Ned Miles has told us; and still stranger is that which we have gathered from these women," said Captain Heywood to his first lieutenant, Mr. Adeane, as they

were pacing the sands beneath the rocks, trying to keep as much as possible in the shadow, but yet where they might see every movement, both in the cottage and about the Beacon Cliff. Pepita and Blanca were also watching, and approaching at some little distance appeared a light-footed young man, picturesque in figure and air, with a mandoline in his hand, which he now and then struck, and humming, apparently from the mere impulse of a gay and buoyant temperament, brief snatches of many airs.

"However, we are not alone in our folly, if folly it be," continued the English officer, for there are the votaries of St. Teresa; and the young man tripping towards us on the other side seems, by the description, to be the muleteer, the lover Gil—what is his name? Gil Gomez. If there be, as Diego suspects—and he has been so constantly faithful and watchful

that I rely implicitly upon his word—If there be treachery we shall be strong enough to seize the traitor — provided always, that he be simple enough to come again. Ha! the muleteer was expected. There is a light in Catalina's chamber—is it not what was described to us as Catalina's chamber? Aye! there she is, opening the lattice, and we shall after all play no more important part than that of witnesses to a serenade. No, by heaven, she is the culprit after all. Look how she is forcing herself through that barred and narrow casement. And the lamp! she will set herself on fire. No! she is through. She is letting down the drawbridge. Do you see her, Adeane? It is too heavy for her strength! It will fall back upon her. Had we not better call? No! She has passed it, and is climbing the rock."

"She is asleep, Senor!" cried the Muleteer, who by this time had joined them.

"Holy Mother, protect her! Look how boldly she treads, as if unconscious of danger."

"Yes, it *is* a case of somnambulism. There can be no doubt of it," replied Captain Heywood, in Spanish. "Nothing can be so lucky as our coming, since it frees Diego from all suspicion. But how to save *her!* She pauses now, and if awakened might return without much danger. Shall we call? But what is become of the lover? Aye, I see now, he is rousing the mother and getting upon the balcony."

And more quickly than any, except a lover, could have reached the rock, Gil had won to a place where, if his fair mistress had fallen, he was close behind to save her, and then, after a gay and lively symphony upon the mandoline which he had still retained, he began in a clear, manly voice

the air which she had herself sung that very evening:—

> "Girls! for truant hearts a-playing,
> Vainly vaunted charms arraying."

And before he had finished the first couplet the fair sleeper awakened and fell, with a little start, trembling into the lover's arms.

A STORY OF THE WOODS.

"I thought that all things had been savage here."
SHAKSPEARE.

FEW families were more chivalrously attached to the person and principles of the unfortunate Charles the First than the ancient and wealthy house of Coningsby of Simonburn; and yet such was the jar and conflict of opinion in those stormy days, that the leaven of democracy and puritanism made itself manifest at an early period of his reign in a younger son of that royal and flourishing race.

Ralph Coningsby, the cadet in question, was a grave and thoughtful youth, who, being intended by Sir Walter to pursue his fortunes at the bar, under the auspices of one of the corrupt and subservient judges of the time, threw up his profession in disgust at the oppressions of the Star Chamber and the levity of his fellow Templars; and returned with all speed to Simonburn, where his departure from the family tenets in politics and religion occasioned, to the jolly old knight his father, and the gay gallants his brothers, much such a shock of painful and ashamed surprise as might have been produced by the discovery of some dreadful crime.

Alienated from his relations and connections, he was naturally thrown amongst the professors of his own stricter and sterner faith; many of whom, little anticipating the tremendous convulsion which was about to shake the kingly power to

its very foundation, were turning their eyes towards that fair New World, that distant and interminable wilderness, which the voyages of Raleigh had opened to their view; and where their wildest visions of religious freedom and republican equality might be realized.

Ralph Coningsby's desire to join one of these bands of pilgrims met with a ready assent from Sir Walter, who willingly advanced, even at the expense of a grove of oaks at the back of the hall, the moderate sum required for the outfit and the voyage; so much did he rejoice at the prospect of ridding himself of one whose austerity of morals and of manners was silently felt as a reproach by the whole household, even whilst proclaiming him the opprobrium of his race. To get rid of the first strict professor that ever bore the name of Coningsby, the sacrifice of the grove of oaks seemed nothing. Rather

than see that rigid and sanctimonious young face glooming twice in every day over the wild fowl and the wine flask in the great hall, Sir Walter would have cut down every tree in the park.

Moderately, therefore, but sufficiently provided, Ralph Coningsby set sail from the port of Hull for New England. But although unaccompanied by any of his kindred, the young adventurer had a companion on his voyage, whose society would have been enough to reconcile him to a less voluntary exile.

Alice Ravenshaw was the orphan daughter of a former Vicar of Simonburn. She was an early playmate of Ralph's, reared in the same tenets, and, separated by death from all natural ties, readily consented to become his wife, and to share his fortunes in that distant land. A young girl, who had been her personal attendant, went with them also, from pure

affection and fidelity; and perhaps no three persons ever left their native country with less regret.

A tedious, but on the whole a prosperous voyage brought them to Naumkeak (afterwards called Salem), on the eastern shores of Massachusetts; and Alice and her attendant Lucy were speedily settled in a log hut in the middle of a small clearing, which Ralph, with such assistance from the other pilgrims as kindness offered, or money could buy, applied himself assiduously to bring into cultivation.

Their husbandry prospered. Ralph, young and active, and used to the manly exercises of the time, found health and content in his labours; whilst Alice and Lucy, accustomed to the rude and hardy mode of living which was in those days the lot of all except the very highest ranks (in thinking of the hardships of the Pilgrim Fathers we are a little too apt to

forget the march of civilization, and that the comforts now found in every cottage were then hardly to be commanded in the palace) — Alice and her faithful handmaiden, habituated at home to "winter and rough weather," would have been without a grievance of which to complain, had not they naturally cherished an undefined but ungovernable fear of their neighbours of the woods, the true lords of the soil, the fierce and warlike Red Indians.

Even this feeling, however, was destined to undergo a change. One day, shortly after she had become a mother, Mrs. Coningsby had advanced farther than usual into the woods, tempted by the freshness of a close and narrow valley, in the bottom of which was a clear dark pool surrounded by magnificent trees, whose foliage exhibited all the tender beauty of tint peculiar to that month which the Indians call the moon of

flowers. She had wandered far, and was thinking of returning to her home and her infant, when her ear was caught by the low wailing of a babe, and following the sound she saw a Squaw seated on the ground, her back supported by a large white oak, and an infant clinging to her bosom, whilst a Warrior stood leaning upon his bow, in an attitude of dejection, and with an expression of painful suffering which those "Stoics of the Woods" seldom allow themselves to exhibit. On approaching them nearer she saw that the Squaw was dead, and that the wailing child was vainly pressing its little fingers against her breast, for the nourishment which it could no longer afford.

The cry of nature is alike in all languages. It went straight to the young Englishwoman's heart. She snatched the famished infant from the lap of its dead mother, and regardless of colour or race,

placed it to her own bosom, wept over it as it inhaled the nutriment which it so much wanted, and contrived to make the grateful chief understand that his little son should share her cares and her love with her own boy. And for above two years Corbitant (such was the name of the Narragansett chief, one of the most powerful of his tribe) left the child in her hands. At the end of that period, just when he had begun to lisp the name of mother, a dead deer was one morning found at the door of their cabin, and the Indian boy was gone.

Time rolled on. Divisions upon points of doctrine and church discipline had arisen among the religious community of Salem, as Naumkeak was now called; and they who had sailed three thousand miles to escape the intolerance of the dominant establishment in the old country, became themselves intolerant of the opinions of

their neighbours. Alas, and these are the wise!

Ralph Coningsby had mingled deeply and bitterly in these differences; and partly from that cause, partly from an adventurous love of life in the wilderness, he and his now large family retired deeper into the woods, and were settled at an extensive clearing remote from other habitations.

One evening the father, his two elder sons, and their male domestics, had gone to some distance to seek for their strayed cattle; and their trusty damsel, Lucy, was standing at the door listening to the mournful note of the Whip-poor-Will, whilst the mother and her younger children were pursuing their customary avocations in the house. Suddenly Lucy rushed in, and seized a carbine, whilst an arrow, falling at Mrs. Coningsby's feet, explained too clearly the motive of her

strange action, and told the startled household that the Pequods, the most treacherous and dangerous of the Indian tribes, were upon them. In another second, before the faithful handmaiden, bold from the very desperation of fear, could fire the carbine which she had seized, they heard the terrible war-whoop, and gave themselves up for lost. Another minute passed; the frightened inmates of the dwelling, expecting the instant entrance of their merciless foes, almost dreading, so numerous did they seem, that the return of Mr. Coningsby and his sons would but add fresh victims to those whose doom seemed already sealed; when they were aware of another and more powerful band of warriors advancing from an opposite point, and a yet shriller war-whoop, at the sound of which the cowardly Pequods fled, whilst the friendly Narragansetts formed a guard around the house; and

their young leader, approaching Mrs. Coningsby as she advanced to give him entrance, bent to kiss her garment, and whispered in the broken but well-remembered accents of infancy, "Mother! dear Mother!"

THE WOODCUTTER.

"Murder, most foul, as in the best it is—
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE tract of land which joins Hampshire to Berkshire is surprisingly wild and rude, considering that it is situated in what may be called the immediate neighbourhood of the metropolis—that is to say, within twenty leagues, and in the very midst of the best cultivated and most populous district of the South of England. It consists of a chain of hills, or, perhaps, more ac-

curately speaking, of a belt of high table-land, so high that the Romans, those dear lovers of a commanding position in every sense of the word, had erected a series of military posts along the line; embracing the two picturesque and precipitous stations called Cæsar's Camp and the Beacon, and the city of Silchester, whose deep fosse, now a verdant meadow,—whose rock-like wall, crowned with old trees, and twined together with ivy,—and whose graduated amphitheatre, remain almost entire; whilst the tesselated pavement of the baths is now and then exposed by the plough, and the course of the streets may still be traced by the stunted growth of the springing or ripening corn—forming altogether one of the most perfect and curious Roman remains in the kingdom.

In this tract there were few inhabitants of the higher order. Divided amongst three or four large and distant landed

proprietors, the old manor-houses that still remained standing, had degenerated from their pristine rank and beauty into the dwellings of yeomen of the second class; while even these farms were, from the prevalence of common land, remote and unfrequent; and the livings were, from the same cause, so small that two or three of them were mere appendages to richer benefices, and served by curates from the nearest town; so that that blessing of a rural district, the resident country clergyman—a blessing even in his secular capacity, as the friend of the poor, their comforter in distress, and their counsellor in perplexity,—the educated and intelligent man, known to them all, and to whom every one may resort, with the certainty of commanding his disinterested advice, and his zealous services,—even this important functionary was wanting at Allonby.

As the farmers were few and scattered so were the agricultural population, which may be said to depend upon them. The very shops were so far apart, that if the inhabitants had been more numerous, there would have been danger of a famine; and before the New Beer Act, there was not an alehouse in the parish. Poaching had always flourished, in no common measure, at Allonby; but now that a beer-shop, snugly ensconced beneath the very corner of the coppice, offered the delinquents a convenient rendezvous, the Act authorizing the sale of game facilitated the disposal of the spoil, the severe and angry keeper found his hares and pheasants disappear with tenfold rapidity.

This keeper, Michael Parr by name, was one of the most important personages of the neighbourhood. Besides the liberal salary and comfortable residence which he derived from his situation, his late wife

had been a widow of some little property for her station, and the two young daughters, by her first husband, who were left under his care and guardianship (he had no child himself), had each so many hundreds as would render them excellent matches for young men in their own rank of life. The younger, Anne Rowarth, was indeed still a child; but her sister Lucy, a girl of nineteen, was one whose charm of person and manner, her sweetness and gaiety, and a certain natural gentility and grace, rendered her, in addition to her little portion, an object of great attraction to the beaux of the village.

Lucy's gentillesse had all the advantage of contrast; for, although gamekeepers be generally, in consequence probably of their frequent intercourse with their masters, amongst the best mannered of gentlemen's servants, Michael Parr was a notable exception to the rule; being

about the roughest and surliest peasant in the whole county of Southampton; loud, rude, overbearing, and obstinate. How his step-daughter, reared under his roof, and with little benefit from female training, (for her mother had been dead for many years), came by her smiling gentleness, might be a puzzle, if we did not every day see living instances of such associations, the modest violet springing up from the roots of the gnarled oak, and the woodbine intertwisting its flowery garlands with the dark and prickly leaves of the holly. It seems a law of nature that the sweet and gracious should mingle with the stern and the frowning, without either losing one particle of its distinguishing quality.

That Lucy would not have been happier with a step-father of milder mood, I do not pretend to say; but she had the rare and precious secret of making the best of her situation, even under circum-

stances of more than usual trial to a young and soft-hearted girl.

"Never fret, Annie," said she one day, in reply to certain murmurings and pityings of the affectionate and quick-tempered child, "never fret about me; times will mend. Perhaps my father may at last forget this old grudge between him and Master Prescott; for he cannot really believe, whatever he may say, that either he, my Lord's head woodman, or his son, are concerned in this poaching, which worries him so; perhaps Master Prescott and he may make up matters; or perhaps he may learn to distinguish between William and his father. I am sure nobody can be more respectful to him than poor William is; he treats him as if he were my Lord himself; or, at all events, Annie, even if that shake of the head of yours say true, and there is no chance of his relenting, why eighteen months will soon pass away,—

and then"—and with a blush and a smile of exquisite brightness Lucy turned away her fair face from her young sister and suddenly stopped, as suddenly as if William Prescott himself had been there to hear her.

"Eighteen months and then! and what then, sister?" inquired Annie, laughing.

"Why then, you know, I shall be one and twenty; of age, as it is called."

"Well, but will that make Master Parr open his front door to let in William Prescott?"

"No!" rejoined Lucy; "but if William should continue in the same mind, there will be nothing to hinder me from walking out of the front-door to my aunt at Belford—and then—you know, Annie, that by our poor mother's will, if, when I am one-and-twenty I should happen to—to marry, and have a home for you, you may

come if you like and live with me. Would you come, Annie? Would you like to live with William and me?"

"Would I, my own dear Lucy! Would I not?" and instantly they were clasped in each other's arms, with the affection that so well became the near and dear relationship by which the young orphans were united.

This conversation took place as they were arranging the light and pretty cottage kitchen, bright and radiant with the mingled effects of cleanliness and order, after their noontide meal. The repast itself had been embittered to Lucy, and still more to her loving little sister, by the violence and threats of Michael Parr, who had passed the whole of dinner-time in speaking ill of William and his father. Then with the happy buoyancy of youth came these peaceful and happy anticipations,—anticipations never destined to be realized!

The two old men had unluckily met the night before at the sign of the Horse Shoes, a place which, although neither was a drunkard, both parties visited much too frequently; and the keeper, whose naturally surly temper was stimulated into tenfold fierceness by beer, having more than insinuated his suspicions that the woodcutter was art and part in the disappearance of his hares and pheasants, an accusation which, aided, in his own case, by mine host of the Horse Shoes' good liquor, caused his adversary's wrath to blaze forth so wildly that it was as much as the landlord and the rest of his company, consisting of the parish clerk, the blacksmith, and the shoemaker, could do to prevent the defiance which each had hurled at the other from ending in a personal conflict; whilst William, who came in accidentally, had caused a diversion of the pugnacious keeper's fury by calmly

assuring him that some day or other he would repent his present conduct. Nothing is so provoking to a man in a passion, as a cool prediction of this sort from one whose temper is unruffled; and this threat, as he called it, had not only thrown Michael Parr into fresh fury at the moment, but had rankled in his mind to that very hour; the last words that he spoke on leaving home implying his fixed resolution to detect the Prescotts, if, as he firmly believed, they were the poachers, and to bring it home to them if it should cost him his life.

And this was the declaration that had awakened Annie's sympathy, and alarmed her for the fate of her sister's love affair, in which, like most young girls led by circumstances into such confidences, she took a warm and anxious interest.

With a view to relieve the expression of gloomy thought which clouded Lucy's

countenance, Annie exclaimed, "Let us go to the Holm Coppice, Lucy, after we have called upon dear Aunt Benham. I have not gathered one primrose this year, and I do so love to find the very first. Besides," quoth the little maiden, in a half whisper, "they are felling the elms, and William will be there. Let us go to the Holm Coppice."

A momentary smile played round Lucy's rosy mouth; love and joy were in every dimple. But a moment's reflection changed the glad expression of her lovely face, although its sweetness was indestructible; she shook her head, and paused for an instant at the wicket, which she was opening. "No, Annie! you forget that my father will be there also, setting, as he declared, some trap, not for the game, but for the poachers. And even if he were not in that coppice, we ought not to go there. It is not maidenly, dearest Annie,

to go without cause to the place where ——," and with a blush, quick and unconscious, which brought back the smiles and the dimples, a blush which rose to her very temples, she suddenly paused. "The time will come, mine own Annie, when you will understand these feelings. We must not go to the coppice! But we may, perhaps, meet with some primroses on the southern side of the Mount. I should like you to find your favourite flower to-day, Annie; we'll walk over the Mount."

Now this Mount, as the country people call it, is the very perfect remains of the old Roman amphitheatre.

The level space in the middle, a direct and most equal oval, with its open entrances for wild beasts at each end, and the graduated seats for the spectators, rising rank over rank, each distinctly traceable, although overgrown with ivy and trailing plants, and mixed with huge trees, the

growth of centuries, in which the rooks have formed a large and noisy colony; this amphitheatre, so perfect and yet so changed, the oval space in the middle being all that is now clear of wood, and which is quite as level as a lawn, had been always one of the sisters' favourite haunts.

Passing, therefore, the rock-like walls, crowned with pollard oaks, and tufted with immense bushes of ivy, maple trees, and hoary thorns, with the dark and mirror-like pool, which reflects so finely the tall elms upon the margin, the white speckled clouds, and the clear blue sky, they reached the amphitheatre, and found, in a southern nook, among the roots of an old beech, a tuft of primroses, in all the variety of blossom, from the full expanded flower, already fading, to the tiniest bud; and close beside this fresh, fragrant plant, at the sight of which Annie clapped her

hands and laughed, insensible to the dignity which a maiden almost in her teens ought to have displayed,—close to the "primrose pale," she had the delight of finding a half-blown violet, "dim, but sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes, or Cytherea's breath," at which treasure little Annie fairly jumped and shouted with ecstacy; and then after gathering her wild nosegay, together with other stray blossoms which she had found scattered in that sheltered nook, she and Lucy proceeded to the widow Benham's cottage, which stood beside the Mount, snugly protected from the chill north-east; and doubled the pleasure which the flowers had already given her, by presenting them to her venerable friend, and arranging them in a small cup of delicate old china,—a relique of better days, of which the white ground was almost as transparent as an egg-shell, while the raised flowers might vie in deli-

cacy of colouring and arrangement even with these, the first beauties of the spring.

Mrs. Benham took the freedom of age and affection to speak of William Prescott, and lament the squabble at the Horse Shoes, and especially the threat of vengeance of which she had heard: "And yet he is a fine youth, Lucy, and a good son has he been to the dead and the living, to her who is gone and to him who remains; and the good son will make the good husband. If my brother Michael could but be reconciled—but we must wait and hope: ye are full young yet, and may have many happy years in store. A blessing will go with you, Lucy, if only for your kindness to a lone widow who has none to care for her now save your gentle heart, my precious child." And the tears fell from the good dame's eyes, whilst answering drops mingled with the smiles and blushes on Lucy's blooming cheeks.

It was now sunset, for the primrose quest, and the daily cares rendered by both the girls to the sick widow, had caused the time to pass by unheeded. But it became every moment more and more probable that the keeper, always irritable and impatient, might return home for his tea, and Lucy, laying aside her scruples respecting William, agreed to return by the shortest path; in the present case, certainly not the quickest; for the woodcutter, whether attracted by the light and graceful figure as the two young maidens crossed the style leading into the coppice—or whether he was really leaving work, so that the meeting was purely accidental—did yet join the fair sisters just as they were passing rapidly on their way; and the five minutes hurried talk, which ensued, albeit full of fear and consciousness, a brief and stolen interview, was yet inexpressibly soothing and comfortable to both.

"Your *step*-father" (William, who never used ill-words towards anybody, proved his distaste towards Michael Parr by the constant addition of that ominous monosyllable; never had he been known to say your father), "your step-father, Lucy, will repent his unkindness towards us both before long. Of that I am certain. He shall repent it. Will you go, Lucy? Can't you stay a little longer? Five minutes? One? This is meeting only to part. Well then, if go you must, good night, my Lucy! Good night, Annie! If you won't let me return with you, I must run back to fetch my axe which I have left in the copse, Annie! One word, Annie! A secret! A great secret! Lucy must not hear—come nearer: Now listen! Do contrive to call upon Mrs. Benham just about this time to-morrow, and to come back this way. Manage that for me, Annie. Good night, dear Lucy!" said the lover, disappearing over the style.

Annie, charmed to find herself of importance, and making a great mystery of William's whisper, tripped back in the gayest spirits; and such is the buoyancy of youth and so contagious the hilarity of a young and innocent girl, that, unpromising as their prospects appeared, Lucy herself was happy and hopeful in no ordinary measure. Little cause had they for the haste which they had made to gain their home before the return of the cross-grained keeper.

They waited tea (the meal which in that sort of life is, perhaps, especially amongst women, that which they like the best), they kept the tea-kettle on their cleanly-swept hearth, until an hour so fashionable that it would not have been credited in Allonby; and when at last they took their own simple meal, they deposited the keeper's nicely-made toast, together with the tea-pot, in the chimney corner, to keep it warm for him in case of

his returning shivering with cold and fatigue from a night watch of the coverts; for with these poor girls, Lucy especially, duty was almost as wakeful and careful as love. Midnight came and passed, and still no signs of Michael Parr.

As the night wore on, the placid cheerfulness with which the betrothed maiden had been blest yielded naturally enough to anxiety and depression. The rain had long been pattering on the eaves; a cold wind moaned among the tall trees, whose huge branches creaked in the rising tempests like the mast of some mighty ship; and the dogs, the keeper's especial charge, howled in a manner which even they who are most accustomed to these sagacious animals cannot, under certain circumstances, help feeling to be ominous, however difficult it might be to convey the impression to any who had not heard that most dismal of living sounds.

"Hark!" interrupted Annie; "I hear steps, they are coming. Can that be Chloe's bark? How wild and strange! Don't open the door yet, sister. It can't be them?"

And wild and strange was the short, quick unintermitted bark, which, sharp, piercing, and painful even to agony, rose above the redoubled chorus of howling from the kennel above the blasts of the tempest, and above the steps and voices of many men, who were now distinctly heard approaching the cottage. They paused in the court, afraid it may be to convey to the innocent girls the shock which their dreadful burthen could not fail to impart; but Chloe had no such scruple: she, continuing her wild shrill cry, flung herself against the door, scratching at it with her slender paws, as if she would have beaten it in; and, when Lucy's trembling hands undid the latch, rushed

wildly towards the hearth, pausing for a moment in front of her master's high-backed oaken chair, and then, returning restlessly to the group in the court, leapt up as if endeavouring to reach some object in the background.

The sight of Chloe had prepared the sisters in some degree for what was to follow. The poor dog's silky coat was dabbled in blood, not her own ; and when Thomas Leigh, the under-keeper, tried, and strong rough man as he was, tried in vain, to announce the dreadful news to Lucy, she at once relieved and surprised him by inquiring in a low voice, "Is he dead?"

Dead Michael Parr had been for some hours. The body when found was stiff and cold. Marks there were of a severe, though probably a brief struggle, the ground being considerably trodden about, and one or two hazel branches broken

and torn down. But upon the whole the death had been quick and sudden; a ghastly wound in the head, by some sharp and weighty instrument, having extinguished life at a blow. Beyond this all was mystery. The under-keeper, Thomas Leigh, whose cottage was placed at a considerable distance to watch other coverts upon this extensive tract of woodland manors, had been roused, just as he was retiring to rest, by the same sharp shrill cry of distress, I may say of anguish, from poor Chloe, accompanied by beatings apparently much too violent for her strength against the door of his dwelling. Upon his answering her summons, she instantly seized his coat; and being well acquainted with her sagacity, and her strong affection for her master, he and his brother had followed her to the Fifty Acre Coppice, and there,—"I mean the coppice where the woodcutters are at work," added

Thomas in explanation, "there we found the body;"—what he would have said farther was interrupted by Lucy's falling down in a fainting fit, from which she was with great difficulty recovered—recovered only to hear of fresh horrors.

Judicial enquiry soon led to the development of some circumstances which were suspicious only to professional acumen. Tracks and foot-marks had been discovered, which suddenly disappeared at the Woodcutter's cottage. The elder Prescott had been engaged during the previous day and still remained at some distant woods, selecting and marking, under the direction of an eminent surveyor, the oak timber to be included in this year's fall. *He* was out of the question. William, besides the worn and harassed appearance of a man who had passed the night in tremendous crime or overwhelming misery, presented the strange mixture of reserve and reck-

lessness so often observed in great criminals. Circumstance upon circumstance combined to fix the guilt upon him and upon him only. The remarkable tipped shoes, whose marks had been traced from the corpse to the cottage, which the village shoemaker and his neighbour the blacksmith, both identified as ordered by himself were actually found upon his feet; a jacket, with stains, which, although partially washed out still bore traces of what the surgeon, called to examine the body, recognised as the ineffectually removed marks of blood; this jacket, still wet and known by twenty persons as William Prescott's usual dress, was thrown carelessly in a corner; and underneath it lay, equally well known, the axe which he was accustomed to use in his labour, and which, besides corresponding exactly with the wound on the head, which had proved Michael Parr's death-blow, retained ghastly evidence of the deed.—"The gray

hairs yet stack to the heft!" From the moment that the police officer held up the axe, mute but eloquent accomplice of this awful deed, the doubt and pity which had before accompanied the search throughout the cottage, disappeared before the natural horror which such a crime awakened. The accused took no means to revive or awaken more favourable feelings. He sank upon the settle beside the hearth, whose untended embers had been long extinguished, in shivering silence; and when handcuffed to one of the constables, and roughly commanded to follow, he seemed rather to obey the mechanical impulse of the man to whom he was linked, than to apprehend the meaning of the words.

Some amongst the villagers had observed the previous quarrel, as well as the parting of the lovers, and, more dead than alive, Lucy obeyed a summons to the inquest in

trembling silence; and, deaf from excess of nervous irritation, tried vainly to hear and to comprehend the mild and soothing address of the official functionary. Looking up for that purpose, she caught sight of William. The expression of his countenance, his attitude, and the irons with which he was loaded, told her at a glance the dreadful truth. She listened to no questions, she waited for no pause, but, shrieking with fearful rapidity, "He is innocent! He is innocent! Beware how ye, too, commit murder!" she fell upon the floor in strong hysterics. From that hour many weeks of fever and delirium passed away, before she was restored to the agonizing consciousness that a verdict of wilful murder had been returned against William Prescott.

This tragedy occurred just after the Lent Assizes had been holden at the county town, so that the prisoner had the ad-

vantage of a considerable space of time in which to seek such testimony as might counterbalance the strong chain of circumstantial evidence upon which the verdict of the inquest had been founded. And after the immediate and fierce indignation had subsided, the usual re-action had taken place; many began to balance the virtues of a life against the suspicions of an hour; and offers were conveyed to the jail of whatever money might be needed to trace the real criminal. Calmly and thankfully were they declined. Without confessing the crime, William Prescott seemed resolved to abide the punishment. Even from one, the dearest, he had refused such proffers—refused even to admit her to his cell.

"It is strange, Annie," said she, as they were walking together on a balmy May evening, when the sun, almost level with the horizon, shone upon

a row of weeping birches that crowned a bank covered with gorse and broom—the light, magical in its effect, tinting the silver barn and golden tassels of the "lady of the woods" with a fairy lustre, that more than realized Turner's daintiest fancies—"it is passing strange that William seems to take as much pains to prevent his friends establishing his innocence as another might do to prevent the proof of guilt. Why, if it were, indeed, the poachers whom our good aunt Benham suspects—why for them should he throw his life away? since, if he still persists in this silence, the lawyers say that nothing can save him. Well," continued she, in the same calm and resigned tone in which she had hitherto spoken, "I shall not survive him long! Do not cry so, dear Annie. In that certainty is my only comfort."

"Nay, dearest sister," began Annie, when she was interrupted by a rustling

on the other side of the bank, accompanied by a renewal of that fearful barking, never heard save on that fearful night, from Chloe, the murdered keeper's favourite dog.

A miserable man, lean, pallid unwashed, unshaven, ragged, starved, crawled forth, scarcely resisting the attacks of Chloe, whose furious assaults were restrained with difficulty by the trembling girls, and dragging himself to the feet of Lucy, demanded, in a tone of agony, "As you would save a sinful soul, tell me the truth, and the whole truth—if the murderer be not found, must William die?"

"As surely as I stand here," was the reply.

"Take me to the good vicar, drag me before the magistrates, let all the country hear me—bring them hither before I die"—and he fell back, as if already his last hour were come.

"This is what I have believed in my inmost heart," said Lucy, "ever since I have known that William's father had disappeared. Oh, Master Prescott!" said she, as the old man, upon whose pallid face Annie had sprinkled cold water from a bright spring by the way-side, was once more reviving—"oh, Master Prescott, clear, if you can, your innocent son! I always knew that he was innocent!"

The old man spoke with effort and difficulty:—"We met that night in the coppice. I had gone there to ascertain the girth of one particular tree. He seized me, pretending to take me for a poacher; knocked me down, spurned me, being down; and, when I rose, maddened by his insults, the axe was in my hand, and in my frenzy, I struck at him as if I had been felling an oak;—then came my noble boy—he dragged me away, and made me promise not to surrender myself.

Oh, Miss Lucy, bring witnesses, bring officers to carry me to prison! Think, if I should die without clearing my boy!"

And that night the miserable father did die; but not until, before competent authorities, he had established the innocence of his son.

THE LOST MAGPIE.

"Who would give a bird the lie?"

SHAKSPERE.

I DO not know whether in the list of organs which figure upon the skull-maps in the system of Doctors Gall and Spurzheim, there be any which, being translated, (for of a verity the language of phrenology needs translation) would indicate a fondness for animals. Most assuredly, if no such propensity be therein marked, it is an important omission, and should be supplied forthwith; for that such an

inclination does exist most strongly in numberless individuals of both sexes, and is often developed under the most extraordinary disadvantages, is as certain and far more frequent than the prodigies in music and painting, in languages and in calculation, the Mozarts, the Correggios, the admirable Crichtons, and American boys, those wonders of learning, of science, and of art, whose lives crowd our biographical dictionaries, and whose heads (as handed down in books and portraits) form the triumph of the phrenologist.

Separate from the fondness for animals generally, and more distinctive and engrossing perhaps than any other species of that very engrossing propensity, is the passion for birds. Boys are liable to it as a class; and so they say is that particular order of single women ungallantly termed old maids. It prevails a good deal in certain callings, chiefly among sedentary

artisans, such as tailors, shoemakers, and hairdressers in provincial towns. A barber in Belford Regis is amongst the most eminent fanciers of the profession, and wins all the prizes at canary-shows for twenty miles round.

Also the taste is apt to run in families, descending from father to son through many generations. Ours, for instance, happens to be so distinguished. My grandfather had an extensive aviary, and was a celebrated breeder of the whole tribe of song-birds; and his brother, my grand-uncle, is even now remembered as the first importer of the nightingale into Northumberland. He had two in cages which he kept for several years, to the unspeakable delight of the neighbourhood, who used to crowd around his hospitable door to listen to their matchless note—one of the few celebrated things in the world which thoroughly deserves its reputation.

My dear father was no degenerate descendant of his bird-loving progenitors. How well I remember his telling me under what circumstances he first went to the play. When a little boy at a preparatory school at Hexham, a strolling company visited the town; and being about to get up "The Padlock," (recommended, I suppose, by the fewness of the characters,) and in great distress for a bullfinch, a property essential to Leonora's song,—

> "Say little foolish fluttering thing,
> Whither, ah whither would you wing
> Your airy flight?"

the manager, having heard that he possessed a tame bullfinch, came to him to request the loan; which he granted with characteristic good humour, and received in return from the grateful manager a free admittance for the season. Fancy the pride and delight of the boy in seeing his favourite figuring upon the stage, and

hearing the applause of the audience as he perched upon the prima donna's finger! This must have been considerably above eighty years ago; and (for in this respect, as well as in his general kindness, "the boy was father to the man") the fancy remained all his life in full force and constant exercise. There is scarcely any sort of bird that comes within the compass of moderate means which he has not possessed at one period or another. Once during the twenty years that we lived in a large country-house, with its spacious lawn, its extensive paddock, and noble piece of water, he assembled a great quantity of domestic game, if such a phrase be admissible; pretty speckled partridges—too pretty to be eaten; pheasants of all varieties, from the splendid English bird to its eastern rivals, the gold and the silver; and a large assortment of water-fowl, from the queenly swan down

to the trim little Dutch teal. King Charles himself never had a more extensive collection, or took greater delight in tending and cherishing his feathered subjects. But these half-civilized savages proved attractive to two orders of miscreants,—poachers pursued them by day and thieves by night; and dead or alive, shot or stolen, the domesticated partridges and tame wild ducks gradually disappeared. To them succeeded all manner of curious poultry. Peacocks, pied and white, together with that commoner but most gorgeous bird, who flaunts his starry train over the grass, and whose graceful vanity so becomes his stately beauty, adorned our farm-yard; accompanied by Muscovy ducks, Poland fowls, Friezland hens, crested bantams, and so forth. Then followed pigeons of all denominations. Fantails, pouters, carriers, nuns, and dragons, crowded our dovecote. But somehow or other our ill

luck continued. The poultry had a trick of dying, and the pigeons flew away; so that my father resolved to confine himself to the aviary, and took to breeding canaries, and had the honour of carrying away the prize for three birds of the three orthodox kinds, jonque, pied, and mealy, from nearly two hundred competitors.

Long, too long, would it be to tell of all the smaller songsters, the larks, linnets, thrushes, and blackbirds; the bullfinches, goldfinches, and "all the finches of the grove;" as well as of the owls, hawks, crows, and ravens, the birds of day and the birds of night, which have at different times occupied his attention. Suffice it to say, that fifteen years last August, our feathered family consisted of two nightingales, one of which had been in our possession for sixteen months, singing all day (for in a cage the nightingale only sings during daylight), with matchless

strength and power, from the first of October to the last of June; a piping bullfinch, a linnet, two starlings, and the magpie whose adventures and accomplishments form the subject of this true history.

Amongst our infinite variety of feathered bipeds, the class, which in default of a better name, I shall take leave to denominate talking-birds, had been upon the whole the most distinguished. Even I, who, partly, on account of the tragical termination of many of our pets, partly because I so dearly love freedom and the greenwood, that all the hemp-seed and groundsel in the world would never, I am sure, reconcile me to a cage, did not so heartily sympathise in this taste of my dear father's as I did in most of his other pursuits—even I, albeit no bird fancier, could not help being occasionally diverted by the saucy chattering jays, starlings, and

jackdaws, which it was the especial delight of that saucy, chattering, diverting, personage, Master Ben, our factotum (groom, gardener, page, and jester), to bring about the place.

Pre-eminent over all other talking-birds, and unrivalled since the days of Vert-vert, was the magpie in question. He, for a wonder, was not of Ben's importing. Whence he came nobody knew, although the old molecatcher, who was also the parish sexton, and whom he followed for a whole hour in the twilight as he was setting his traps to catch an underground enemy that infested my pansy-beds, alternately shouting to him by his name of Peter Tomkins, in one ear, and imitating the tolling of a bell in the other, insinuated to me, with a look of great horror, "that the fewer the questions asked upon that subject the better; the creature certainly was no better than he should be. Nobody

could tell for whom that bell would toll next." And off shuffled poor Peter, fancying himself a doomed man.

For certain, Mag's first appearance had been somewhat in character with the good sexton's suspicions. He had hopped down the walk and stopped opposite the glass-door of our garden-room, where we were sitting with several friends, and one amongst them happened to inquire the hour. "What's o'clock?" reiterated Mag, in a soft, slow, distinct voice; "Half-past four." And upon consulting watches, and that very true time-teller, the sun, as he threw his beams upon the old dial, half-past four it was; and everybody stared at the bird, as he stood upon one leg, with his head a little on one side, looking very knowing and exceedingly ragged and dirty, as your tame magpie is apt to do. Everybody stared at the bird, and laughed, and said that it was a strange coincidence, as everybody does say, upon such occasions.

Mag's further proceedings were in keeping with his oracular entrée. A saucy bird he was, and a mischievous, singing, whistling, sneezing, coughing, blowing his nose, laughing, crying, knocking at doors, ringing at bells, thieving, and hiding with singular dexterity. He caught up and repeated with remarkable facility all that was said, and really seemed as if he understood its purport. For instance, I one day said to him, "Mag, if you bite my finger, I will never give you any more fruit or sugar." And although I regularly did feed him every day with sugar and fruit, mine were the only fingers in the house that remained unbitten. He certainly, too, could apply names to their right owners. One of his great delights was to summon all the servants about him; sometimes in his own soft distinct tone—sometimes by imitating with a wonderful cleverness, my voice, or his master's.

"Ben! John! Martha! Lucy! Marianne! And, when he had got them all around him, "Go," he would say, "Go to ——;" and when everybody was expecting something as naughty as Vert-vert would have said, after his voyage in the coche d'eau had contaminated his manners, he would suddenly break into a laugh, and finish his sentence with "Go to Jerusalem! Go to Jerusalem!" He never failed to call over this beadroll of names at least once a-day, and if the wrong person answered, Lucy for Marianne, or Martha for Lucy, he would stamp his little foot and scold, and storm, and refuse to be pacified, until the offender begged pardon and asked him to begin his catalogue again. Sometimes he added the dogs to the list, and the greyhounds—a simple, credulous, innocent race—readily answered to his call. Once, and but once, he took in my lamented Flush, a beautiful little brown cocking spa-

niel, a greater pet even than himself, and infinitely more sagacious. "Flush!" said Mag, with an imitation of my voice that was even startling; and Flush, who was looking forward to our evening walk, threw down his bone and ran to answer the summons. "Flush!" repeated Mag, in the same tone, with a nod and a laugh! In my life I never saw such a mixture of shame and anger as my beautiful pet's large bright eyes exhibited. Mag tried the trick again. But it failed. The perfect good faith of the gentle and faithful little creature, who, never deceiving, could not suspect deceit, had enabled the knavish bird to cheat him *once;* but the imposition, once detected, became, so far as Flush was concerned, altogether powerless.

Nevertheless there was no resisting a certain degree of liking for the poor bird, whose tricks of drollery—for every day he came out with something fresh—really seemed

inexhaustible. He had a cage, to which, being generally fed there, he frequently retired of his own free will. One day, however, he was missing; that tongue of his was a thing to be missed, just as the near neighbours of a mill or church-steeple would soon feel the absence of the clapper and the chimes. He had left the premises more than once before, and had led Ben and John a dance amongst all the trees and cottages of Aberleigh—appearing and disappearing—now on the ground and now on the house-top, playing at bo-peep among the roofs and chimneys in a manner more provoking than words can tell; so that Ben, after fairly lodging his new straw hat on the branches of a pear-tree, from the topmost bough of which Mag, swinging much at his ease, had thought fit to hail him with his usual "How d' ye do, Master Ben?" had fairly given up the chase in despair.

Once, twice, thrice, had Mag eloped; but then the tricksy spirit had never failed to make itself audible; and even when, upon one occasion, he had absented himself for one entire night, he had taken care to re-appear in the morning at Ben's bed-room window with his usual tap, tap, against the glass, and the grave business-like summons—"Past six o'clock, Ben! Time to get up!" wherewith he was wont, as regularly as the clock struck, to awaken that trusty domestic.

Only the Tuesday before, Mag had been absent for a longer period than common; but, directed by a singular noise of fierce and angry jabbering, something like the scolding of a woman in a passion, he had been discovered in a field at the bottom of the garden, engaged in a furious disputation with two wild birds of his own species earnestly defending a bare and dirty bone, his own property doubtless, from the incur-

sions of these intruders. That Madge had fought with other weapons than his tongue, and been worsted—that he was very glad when our approach frightened away his opponents—was quite plain; but they being gone, he gladly followed us home in the opposite direction, and had, up to this unfortunate Friday (for it was upon this day of ill luck that we missed our poor bird), conducted himself with a degree of prudence and discretion that showed him to have taken warning by his contest and discomfiture.

On that Friday, however, he was missing from noon to night; the next morning dawned—six o'clock struck—but no magpie tapped at the window to call Ben; he was neither in the house or the garden, on the trees or the chimneys. That the poor bird was lost seemed indisputable; and so strong was the general impression of his attachment to us, and of his sagacity, that

we were pretty generally convinced that he must have been stolen. Who might be the thief was not so easy to determine. Aberleigh is situated upon a well-frequented road leading from one great town to another, and our cottage stood in the centre of the village street. Moreover, holding a sort of middle station between the gentry, to whom we belonged by birth, and habits, and old associations, and the country-people, almost our equals in fortune, who all resorted to my dear father for advice and assistance in their little difficulties, there was scarcely a person within ten miles who did not occasionally pay a visit to our habitation. Then Ben's acquaintance! gardeners, gamekeepers, cricketers, grooms! Ben knew the whole country. And although it would be rather too affronting to suspect one's friends and acquaintances of thievery, yet they amongst whom the magpie was deservedly

popular had of course contributed to diffuse its reputation.

On that unlucky Friday, too, we had had even more visitors than common. Two or three sets of people had come from London by Railway; five or six neighbouring families had called; the coursing-season was coming on, and two or three brace of greyhounds had been bought by their respective owners to be compared with our dogs; a flower-show was approaching, and half-a-dozen gardeners had been backward and forward amongst zinnias and dahlias; a cricket-match was pending, and the greater part of the two elevens had come to arrange the day and the hour; one constable had arrived for orders to send off an encampment of gipsies who had established themselves in Woodcock lane, and another had come for a warrant to take up a party of vagrants caught in the fact of poaching, and suspected of sheep-

stealing at Hinton-Down. Who was the thief was still a mystery! But when day after day passed over, and no tidings arrived of our bird, that he was stolen became the firm conviction of our whole family.

Sorry, however, as we were for the merry, saucy, little creature, whose spirit of enjoyment and activity of intellect seemed so disproportioned to his diminutive orm and his low rank in the scale of living beings, still the recollection began to wear away; and when at the expiration of a week, we sallied forth to partake of a déjeuner in the beautiful grounds of Aberleigh Great House, our domestic calamity was, to say the truth, pretty nearly forgotten.

Never was a more delightful little party than assembled by the side of the clear brimming Loddon, on a glorious afternoon near the end of August. The day was so

sultry that the tables were laid under some magnificent elms upon the lawn, forming with its adjuncts of picturesque architecture, of exquisite scenery, of lovely young women and thrice lovely children, a picture of gay and courtly elegance worthy of Watteau.

The déjeuner, however, sumptuous and luxurious as it was, formed by no means the chief attraction of the day. Under the long lofty terrace, crowned with old firs and lime-trees, which forms the boundary of Aberleigh Park, the Loddon, spreading for nearly a mile into an almost lake like expanse, rivals the Thames in consequence, whilst it far surpasses it in beauty; and then, narrowing as it is spanned by the low arches of the bridge, glides along amongst quiet water-meadows with a pastoral seclusion and tranquillity which would have enchanted Izaak Walton. A row up this bright river was the express intention

of the party; and, accordingly, the grand question of oars or sculls being decided, water baled out, rowlocks and thowls examined, we set forth in three as pretty skiffs as may be seen between Battersea and Putney Bridge; ourselves as merry and happy a set of people as are often assembled in this work-a-day world.

Some were sailors—one especially, most worthy of that honoured name, which is the synonym of all that is frank and kind and true-hearted in man; and one, who by some mistake in destiny is not really a sailor, but who possesses all the attributes and almost the skill—some were sailors, some were soldiers, some gentlemen at large: but the charm of the party was felt to be the freight of one of the boats, consisting of four lovely young women singing like nightingales, and, as it seemed, from the same impulse of a full and joyous heart, who went backward and forward

upon the water, spreading abroad melody, as the sun diffuses light or the roses their perfume. That craft was naturally looked to as the one from which we should derive most pleasure, but we hardly on embarking anticipated the kind of amusement which it was destined to afford.

It so happened that one of their rowers was accidentally detained, and another compelled to take the management of the boat containing the children, so that our pretty songstresses fell to the charge of one solitary boatman, who, taking care that no real harm should befal them, seemed to find some diversion in plunging them and himself into small difficulties; and, the rudder being unshipped, they, so to say, staggered about upon the water as if the boat were tipsy; now running aground upon an island, now taking a snag (to borrow a phrase current upon the Mississippi); now caught (by veil and bonnet) in the bushes upon one bank,

now entangled in the sedges upon the other, until the syrens of the Loddon, half-frightened and half-amused, mixed screams and squalls with the sweet strains of the Canadian boat-song, and shrieks of laughter with "A boat, a boat unto the ferry."

After shooting the bridge matters grew worse. They had sailed from harbour so long before our boat, that we had hitherto only looked and laughed at the strange tacks, voluntary and involuntary, which their skiff had taken. But now gallantly manned and ably steered, we shot ahead of them, drowning "O Pescator del 'onde" by such a torrent of river wit as shall not be exceeded from Gravesend to Kew.

At last, when, amid laughing and singing, and quiet enjoyment, the mists were rising in the meadows, and the moon looking down into that bright mirror the still smooth stream, we took our fair damsels in tow, and pre-

pared to return homeward. Looking up as we were about to shoot the centre arch of the bridge, I saw a strange vagabondising gipsy sort of light cart, that looked as if it had never paid any duty, passing above it! and while our mermaids were singing with a delightful unity of their young voices,

> "Oft in the stilly night,
> Ere slumber's chain has——'

"bound me," they would have added, but that charm was broken by a well-known voice from above, which pronounced with startling distinctness, "Go, go, go, to Jerusalem!"

Was it my magpie, or was it his wraith?

Of course, by night, a good mile from our landing-place, and then a mile back again to the bridge, all search or enquiry was hopeless. I told the story when I got home, and found the whole village divided

in opinion. Some thought with me that the gipsies had hold of him; some with my father that he had been stolen by the more regular thieves; some thought that it was a trick; some that it was a mistake; and some held with Peter Tomkins that the magpie was no magpie after all, but an incarnation of the Evil One in black and white plumage.

Again was poor Mag forgotten, as one bright September morning we set forth towards Farnham, a pretty old-fashioned town overlooked by the bishop's palace, with its stately trees and extensive park, and famous for its hop-gardens, and for Mr. Garth's geraniums, where in one small greenhouse he rivals in splendour, although not in extent, Mr. Foster's exquisite collection, and equals him in hospitality and kindness. It is something remarkable, I think, something pleasant as well as remarkable, and peculiar to our age and country, that two English gentlemen should surpass, by

the mere effect of taste and skill, the efforts of the working gardeners, whose livelihood depends upon their flowers, with the strong stimulus of desire of gain on the one hand, and the enormous resources of wealth as lavished in the greenhouses of our great noblemen on the other. To raise a magnificent geranium is to increase and multiply beauty, and to strengthen and diffuse the feeling of the beautiful in this work-a-day world. Art herself does little more.

The road from Aberleigh to Farnham passes through very pretty and very interesting scenery. We leave Strathfieldsaye and Silchester, emblems of the present and the past, to the right; and Sir John Cope's magnificent old mansion of Bramshill, and the parsonage at Heckfield, where Mrs. Trollope passed her early days, to the left. Then we pass through a succession of wild woodland country to the little town of Odiham; plunging again into

forest-like glades, until we cross a high, barren, heathy ridge called the Hog's Back, the view from the top of which forms a superb and extensive panorama. Descending this long, steep, and lofty hill, we find ourselves once more amidst cultivation; quaint old-fashioned villages sunk deep in the valley, and patches of hop-gardens intersecting the fields. The hop-gatherers were busy in taking down and stripping the long poles, the English vintage; and the bines hung like garlands in rich wreaths of leaves and flowers intertwined one with another, and diffusing around the bitter racy aroma of the fragrant plant, dear to the lovers of mighty ale. A pretty scene it was and a stirring. We stopped the carriage at the gate to view it more closely, and listen to the gay jests and merriment of the many groups collected in the ground. There is something contagious in real hearty mirth, and Ben,

our driver, without knowing why, joined in the laugh. Apparently his peculiar laughter was recognised; for in a moment we heard from the other side of the gate, "Ben! how d' ye do, Ben? Glad to see you, Master Ben! Go to Jerusalem!" in Mag's most triumphant tones; and this time we did not hear in vain. We recovered our bird; and long we possessed him, happiest, sauciest, and most sagacious of magpies.

LITTLE DAVID: A COURSING STORY.

"Thy greyhounds are as swift as breathed stags."

SHAKESPEARE.

NOTHING can be more striking than the wild and uncultivated aspect of the country, the scanty sprinkling of towns and villages, and the primitive manners and appearance of the scattered inhabitants, which may occasionally be found within some fifty miles of the crowded sophisticated metropolis, and almost within ken of that mighty

engine of civilization—that mighty annihilator of time and space—a railroad. How long this happy state of things—for to those who delight in rural sights and sounds, and dread the day when London and its suburbs shall quite stretch from sea to sea, a happy day it is—how long this pleasant anomaly may continue, I am not rash enough to prophesy; but at this present writing, with the clock on the stroke of twelve, and the chilly, windy, frosty, nineteenth of January stealing into a twentieth, chillier, windier, and frostier still, at this finger-nipping, cold-catching, beginning of the year of grace 185—, I could point out half a dozen tracts of heath and woodland, as free from the contamination of city smoke, or city finery, as the mountains of Wales or the Highlands of Scotland.

The spot, however, with which we are more immediately concerned is a district

of Oxfordshire, divided from the gay and populous county of Berks, and the busy, thriving town of Belford Regis, by one of the most beautiful boundaries in her Majesty's dominions, the broad translucent Thames. No sooner have we passed the long straggling bridge, and left the river and its pretty village behind, than the roads become narrow and rugged, the banks shelving and broken, the hills abrupt and precipitous; the groves and woods by the way side expand into shaggy heaths, sinking into rude dells, and backed by antique forests, and the whole scenery assumes the wild and sylvan character of an old English chase. In early summer, when these commons, dotted by clumps of holly and hawthorn, and dimpled with glittering pools, are bordered by their deep beech woods, shining in the tender green of their young leaves—the irregular belt varied here and there by some huge

cherry tree starting from the verdant mass, and covered with myriads of snowy blossoms—the ground beneath carpeted with wild flowers, from the rarest orchis to the commonest daisy—it is a pleasure of pleasures to dally in those fragrant paths, and penetrate to the utmost depth of those moss-grown recesses; nor is the scene less beautiful in the still clearness of an October noon, when the first frost has given a golden tinge to the foliage of the beech, whilst the cherry trees have assumed that indescribable richness of colouring, which seems as if the fast falling leaves had been dyed in the rosy juice of the fruit. The boasted brightness of the American fall can scarcely exceed the vivid hues of the Oxfordshire "cherry country," after the earliest frosts of an English autumn.

It is not, however, the lover of nature only who delights in this wild district.

The sportsman, baffled by the garden-like cultivation and lawny enclosures of this swarming Berkshire of ours—whose villas and villages, and village greens, some irreverent fox-hunter was once pleased to designate by the name of Clapham Common—luxuriates in the distant coverts of turfy hills to the north of the great river. Dear above all to the courser was that wild and open country, becoming wilder and more open with every mile; the absence of hedgerows enchanted his eye, and the bleak wind, as, having surmounted the Lanton Ridges, he looked fairly across the valley to Hatherton Hill, never failed to gladden his heart: Hatherton Hill being next perhaps to Compton Bottom the best place for trying a greyhound in England; the very Newmarket of coursers.

No wonder that the finding themselves on the road to this place of delight, some

twenty years ago, should exhilarate the spirits of two young country lads, who, driving a spirited horse in a light open carriage, and having charge of two or three brace of dogs belonging to a master who had gone an hour or two before to enjoy a few days' coursing with an intimate friend, conceived themselves amongst the happiest and most important of all human beings. The happiness was pretty equally shared; the importance by no means so; one of the pair, by name Master Ben, being the real groom, valet, man of all work, factotum, and what not, to whom was delegated the charge of carriage, horse, and dog,—whilst his comrade, who boasted the euphonious appellation of Tom, was only a deputy's deputy, hired for the nonce; moreover, Ben was eighteen, and thought himself a man—a mistake into which Tom, younger by two years, and shorter by two inches, could hardly fall; Ben had a new

jacket, Tom an old one; Ben had half-a-sovereign in his pocket, Tom half-a-crown; Ben was a courser, and had been at Hatherton, whilst Tom had not only never visited that classic ground of all sportsmen, but had actually never seen a greyhound run in his life.

To do Ben justice, he did all he could to enlighten Tom's ignorance, at which he thought himself much scandalised, though whether, like many a greater man, he might not find some consolation in so fair an opportunity of laying down the law upon the subject without risk of question, may be doubted; at all events, whatever could be done by talking of coursing, from the traditions of the late Lord Rivers's kennel, the some time monarch of that princely sport, to descriptions of Mr. Goodlake's, his successor in skill, in spirit, and in success, Ben performed *con amore;* and between eulogiums upon all the principal

dogs, with historical accounts of their different matches, and biographies of their several trainers, mixed with certain prophecies respecting the success of "their own stud"—to follow literally the grandiose phrase of the lecturer—especially a yellow bitch called *Marigold.* In talk like this, diversified with occasional digressions respecting the good cheer of the house to which they were bound, and a few hints respecting a black-eyed dairy-maid, who seemed to rival *Marigold* in Ben's regard, the time sped pleasantly along.

Ben had talking to keep him warm, and Tom had novelty and anticipation, and the indomitable spirit of enjoyment of a country boy upon his first journey, sitting in a gentleman's carriage, and behind a gentleman's horse: less happily engrossed they might have been to find that the December's night was closing in raw and cold, and that when, after climbing up a steep ascent,

they again got into the phaeton, the wind, which met them on the top, blew so fiercely as to render walking, if the less dignified, by very far the pleasantest mode of progress. Matters were not mended when the shelving craggy banks, picturesquely clothed with wood, which had hitherto skirted the road, disappeared, and they found themselves on a wide open common, of a very irregular surface, with the young moon just showing her slender face in a dreary-looking piece of water at some distance, and no shelter of any sort visible, so far as they could see. The wind blew colder and colder; the very dogs, instead of keeping, as they had hitherto done, at the side of the carriage, seemed shrinking behind.

"*Marigold!*" cried Ben. "*Myrtle! Mayfly! Marigold!* Whew! *Marigold*, then. Whew—ew—ew!!!" And Ben uttered the shrill prolonged whistle, peculiar and

individual as an autograph, with which he had been wont to summon his favourite.

"Whew—ew—ew!!!" resounded from the bottom of the hill.

Ben was no coward, and the days of ghosts are over (besides, who ever heard of a ghost whistling?), nevertheless, he was a little startled; and when Tom, professing to believe it an echo, drily desired him to try it again—an injunction which he mechanically obeyed—the whistle had, so to say, a shake, which, if it could have been executed at will, would have had considerable value in a musical point of view. It's a great pity that mere letter-press can give no idea of the sound; but, although we must fail in the delineation, yet a most exact copy did arise this time from midway up the hill, continuing at intervals, mixed with slight variations, until at length a small figure, with the whole pack of missing dogs scampering around

him, appeared at the top of the ascent; and Tom (for the hero of the whistle had stopped the horse from more motives probably than he could easily have enumerated) exclaimed, in a tone between amazement and disappointment,—

"Why, it's only little David, after all!"

"Only David!" rejoined Ben, giving vent to another half-whistle, checked pretty hastily, as the effect of the last glanced over his recollection; "David! why it really is that little rascal, and the wretched pigmy of an animal that *Marigold* is tossing over and over can be nothing but his dog *Spider*. I knew that he was dying to come, but to see him here, twenty miles from home, with eight good miles before us before we get to a house, and he all in rags and without a farthing in his pocket—poor tatterdemallion!—to pay for a bed or a supper when we do get to Hatherton; hang it, Tom, there's spunk in the little

creature, is not there? Suppose we take him on with us, eh? Master likes his pluck, and he'll be useful to help hold the dogs. Here, you sir! jump up here, can't you; how came you to bring that dwarfish cur of yours with you? do you think we are going to course rats and mice, or to run against spaniels and terriers? or, for the matter of that, how came you here yourself? Get in, I say; jump!"

And with a sly whistle, ostensibly addressed to the greyhounds in general, and to *Spider* and *Marigold* in particular, but into which, in spite of his gratitude for Ben's condescension, he could not resist the temptation of infusing some slight reminiscence of the above-mentioned shake, little David did jump into the phaeton; and, animated by their past adventure, (nothing is pleasanter than a brief puzzle, with the least dash in the world of a fright, when once it is happily over,) the three drove on in tenfold glee.

Little David, dwarf and tatterdemallion as Ben had justly called him, was a well-known, and, to say the truth, a popular inhabitant of our good village of Aberleigh. The poor boy was an orphan, and how old he was, who were his parents, or to whom, they being dead, he might be said to belong, were questions which nobody gave themselves the trouble to ask. Whether he had such a superfluity as a surname, was doubtful. I question whether he knew it himself, or whether it had ever occurred to him to make the enquiry. "Little David," was distinction enough for him. All that was known of his history was, that he had been placed by some long-past overseer with an old parish nurse, and that when the vestry claimed him as a denizen of the workhouse, Dame Butler, a lonely and childless woman, had become so strongly attached to the friendless boy that she refused to part with him, and in spite of the remonstrances of the parish

authorities, and the still more urgent pinchings of poverty and age, had contrived to support him until he could earn his own living. Wonderfully soon did that happen. David vindicated the affection of his protectress by his industry and good conduct. When other children are hardly trusted to take care of their own limbs, he began to be useful in their little *ménage;* and whilst the other brats of the village were thinking of nothing but getting into mischief and out of scrapes, he was already watching sheep, driving pigs, and keeping birds from the corn for the farmers; milking cows, feeding poultry, and churning butter for their wives; helping, now in the wheelwright's shop, now in the ropeyard, now at the forge; tending the curate's flowers, holding the vicar's horse, and running errands for everybody. Never was so trusty or so alert an assistant! Never, since the time of *Puck*, (and really

David was not much bigger than the popular notion of that *esprit follet,)* was so vivacious or so diligent a little messenger. No opportunity of turning a penny in an honest way came amiss to him; and by the time he was as high, to use Ben's mode of mensuration, as *Marigold's* shoulder, at which time he might by a rough computation be about eleven years old, he had fairly repaid Dame Butler's kindness by earning nearly enough, not merely for his own subsistence, but for hers.

Of all his ways of winning money, however, that in which David most delighted was the hard work called sporting—which, to that half of the world which calls itself the wiser sex, has a fascination so universal, that it must in them, as in the nobler races of animals who minister to the passion, be inborn and intuitive. When still in feminine habiliments, and little bigger than a full-grown infant, it occurred to

David, then exerting himself as *aide-de-camp* to a tall scarecrow in frightening the birds from a field of wheat, to see in a water furrow a hare on her form. The field was by the roadside; Ben, already known to the urchin by sight and name, happened to pass; the boy pointed to the hare: Ben galloped off to fetch his master and the dogs; a fine run was the consequence; and the love of the sport never from that hour flagged or dwindled in David's bosom. As soon as he was old enough to keep up with the party, he was employed to lead the dogs, to help the spaniels in beating hedges, to find hares sitting—in short, to form one of the busy, joyous train, called a coursing party; and he soon became as well acquainted with the greyhounds, and nearly as good a judge of their various merits, as Ben himself.

By accident he had even become possessed of a greyhound in his own person.

One evening in the spring preceding the date of our story, a poor, scared, half-starved creature, apparently only two or three months old, was driven by some idle boys into a small court in front of Dame Butler's cottage. David, tender-hearted to all animals, rated the children, and called the frightened, trembling puppy, in a tone which, with the remarkable instinct by which dogs at once recognize their friends, the poor little thing immediately obeyed. The remains of a basket were about her neck; she had evidently escaped from some coach or railway, and wandered about probably for days. After having satisfied his conscience by making inquiries at Belford, David, attached to his foundling—the first living thing he had ever called his own—from the sense of benefit conferred and the poor creature's fond gratitude, prevailed with some difficulty on his good old grumbling nurse to

receive *Spider* (by which exceedingly plebeian name he chose to designate her) as an inmate.

Never were dog and master better proportioned to each other. *Spider* was far more like an Italian than an English greyhound, and, dwarfed probably by her early misadventure, did really seem fitter, as Ben said, to pursue "rats and mice, and such small deer," than to run after a full-grown hare; and, as to permitting him to try her speed against *Marigold*, a presumptuous wish which David had been rash enough to hint at, the thing was too derogatory to be thought of. It would be like matching a Shetland pony against a race-horse.

It was not even without many rebukes for bringing such a lap-dog, and many injunctions to remember that he must make everybody understand that *Spider* did not belong to "our stud," that Ben

suffered David to bring his lap-dog (the most injurious name that he could think of) along with them. He even snubbed Tom for venturing to assert that she would be pretty if she were rather bigger. To all which contumelies little David, who had received many kindnesses from Ben, to say nothing of the present cast, made no worse answer than a whistle.

Brightly shone the son on Hatherton Hill, when, on the second morning after their journey, horse, and dog, and man, properly rested and refreshed, sallied forth for a long day's diversion. It was a gay and gallant sight: the hospitable host, surrounded by his own fine family, his troops of friends, and train of grooms and keepers, upon that magnificent eminence, forming a panorama, for extent and for historical interest, such as shall hardly be paragoned in the south of England. And the sport was worthy of the scene.

Never were such hares; never were such dogs! *Marigold* beat *Nestor;* and Ben was beside himself. And little David, who had never before seen coursing upon the Downs, David was crazy! It seemed incredible that so much noise—for to the honour of coursing be it said, there is no noisier pastime—could come from so small a body.

At last, after host and guest had been alternately victor and vanquished in the friendly strife, and after some half dozen of the neighbouring gentlemen had also breathed their greyhounds, an event occurred which put an unexpected and most unintended check to the gaiety of the meeting. Sir John Harewood, one of the greatest coursers in England, who was known to be on a visit to a neighbouring nobleman, suddenly appeared, attended by a vast retinue of trainers, and grooms, and dog-boys, and a stud of some twenty brace

of greyhounds ; and advancing most courteously to the party, hoping that he should not be considered as an intruder if he preferred a request to try the speed of one or two of his dogs against some of those present. There was one which he particularly wished to try against the fleetest that could be found, as he intended to run him the next week for the cup at Deptford Inn, and another that had just won the goblet at Swaffham. If any gentleman would favour him with slipping a good dog against one of these, he should think himself much honoured.

" Whew !" quoth Ben. Ben was dumbfounded ; and, to say the truth, his betters were rather taken aback. Something one muttered about *Marigold* having cut herself, and another about *Nestor* having already run two courses; and the Lord of the Manor was about to couple a most courteous refusal of the challenge with a

request that Sir John would run as many of his own dogs upon the hill as he chose, when, to the unutterable astonishment of the whole field, little David led *Spider* up to the training groom, and boldly proposed to run her against the dog who was about to be entered at Deptford Inn.

"Whew—ew—w!" quoth Ben, with redoubled energy.

The groom, a tall man mounted upon a tall horse, looked down upon David with the sort of scornful astonishment with which the giant may be supposed to have eyed the noted "Jack" of the nursery legend, and vouchsafed no reply; but his master, a thoroughly well-tempered and kindly person, after enquiring to whom the pretty little creature belonged, and hearing from David's chief patron and protector the story of the boy and his dog, ordered *Harebrain*—between whom and *Spider* there was nearly the same dispro-

portion as between the groom and her master—to be put into the slips.

"Whew!" said Ben again. "She's really pretty. If she should beat, now! David and she belong to our party. It's only right to back 'em up. Hark ye, you sir upon the great horse, I'll bet you half a crown upon the little 'un;" shouted he, as a hare being found, they were led to a bottom, which, as the hare was sure to make for the steep ascent, was peculiarly favourable to the smaller dog.

"Done!" responded the tall groom, grinning. "Has any one else a mind for a bet? or will you venture another half crown, comrade?"

"No!" said Ben, who indeed had only made this bet in a spirit of good fellowship, by way of encouragement to David and protection to a dog who came with his party. "No more bets, thank ye! Ah, she's off! Now, *Spider!*"

"Now, *Harebrain!*" shouted the grooms and dog-boys. But not long did they shout. *Harebrain*, used to the slips and eager for the sport, had been nearly a yard a-head at first starting. But the bitch had passed him like lightning, strained up the hill side, gained upon the dog at every stride, and had finally turned and killed her hare without *Harebrain's* coming in for a turn.

"Whew—ew—ew!" quoth Ben. "I beg your pardon, David, for doubting the bitch. She's a good 'un, sure enough; and I'm half a crown richer than I thought I was. Don't go mad about it, though, David; nor don't eat *Spider* up!"

"It must be all accident," cried the training groom, after honourably disbursing Ben's money. "Have you a mind to run her again, my little man? Double or quits, sir?"

"Ay! ay!" cried David.

'Ay! ay!" said Ben.

"The latter worthy was however about to demur a little, when, instead of the candidate for the cup at Deptford Inn, he found them slipping the winner of the Swaffham goblet. But David stopped him.

"Let her run their best," said he; "you'll see she'll beat them."

And beat them she did, after a longer course and a more decided triumph. And Sir John won the cup after all, not indeed with *Harebrain*, but with *Spider*, alias *Helen*, whom he purchased of her master at so high a rate, that little David returned to Aberleigh a moneyed man, with a fortune in the savings'-bank, a new suit for himself, and a new gown for Dame Butler.

END OF VOL. III.

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